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(MY WORDS)

10



21 Years ago (during the Second intifada), Faris Odeh was shot in the neck by Israeli forces while he was throwing stones in Ghaza. He was 15 years old. Today, there still is no justice for Palestina...

rip Fadéh

Introduction

Issue 10. For some reason it felt like a grand achievement, a special birthday issue and thus I need to do something special / different. So I thought about this and decided to adapt some changes to the look and feel of the magazine. Make it a little less clean cut and add some more grit and dirt. I make a lot of pictures while hiking and exploring and I've exposed quite a lot of those pictures in here but I wanna try and do something more, some details. And next to my photographs the internet has a lot of dark caverns full of some great material from the last century to enlighten these pages here. Strange because... While it was always my intention to step away from those backgrounds and cut and paste style things, I now feel the need to try it anyway. And no, I'm not trying to copy or compete with Boothaeven or BOD, I'm just trying...

While issue 9 was full of joy on attending shows again, this issue is about taking steps backwards. The fourth wave has arrived in Belgium, numbers are increasing by the hour, virus has grown in strength, restrictions are the law of the day. I wonder where we'll be in a month's time...

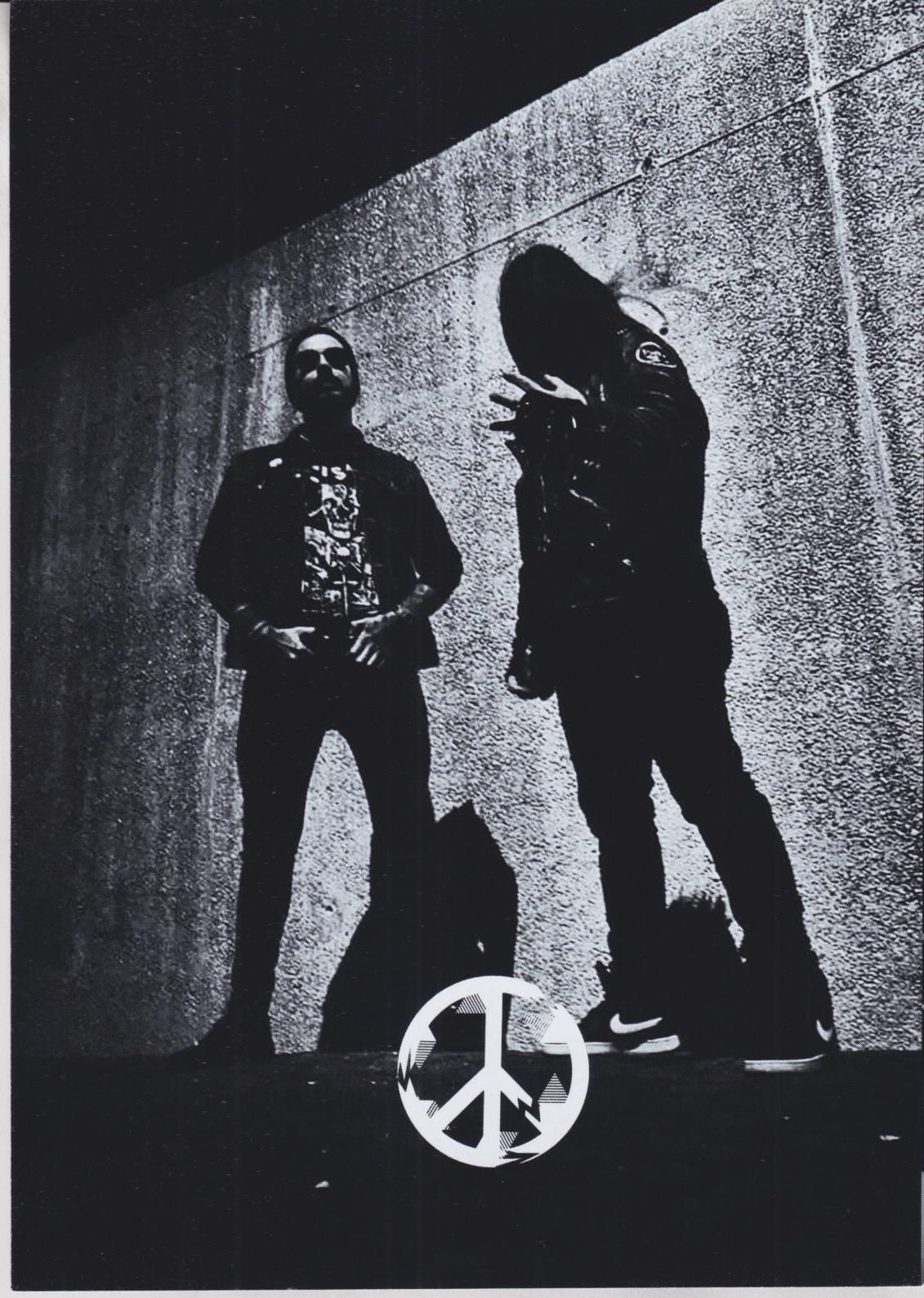
Oh well, stop whining, right? At least something good came out of lockdown. ZINES! I was able to lay my hands on some great reading material again. First zine I want to shine some extra spotlight on is the Ball Of Destruction zine out of Belgium. Issue 6 and, yes, issue 7! The latter being some light version but still well worth your money. Why do I like BOD? Well it's simple, Angelo's writing skills are top of the game. Yes he covers a lot of bands I would never read about in other settings, but somehow he manages to drag me along and read his zine back to back. And I'm not afraid to say he influences my writing and my approach to My War (I read your comment in the My War review and you were right! Hence the first lines in this introduction). Check out his zine and indulge in HC ephamora. Second is another Belgian banger, Boothaeven issue 6. I love the mix of HC Punk and Black Metal here. Very well written as well, interviews take unexpected turns with smart questions, love it. What really stands out in Boothaeven is Lowie's flawless high contrast cut and paste styled lay-out and print. Lowie masterclassed this style and left all other zines miles behind. I contributed the Violent Christians interview in this issue, that was... weird. I also

read the NYHC 1980-1990 book. The best era of NYHC in my opinion! So they gradually build up the timeline with each chapter going a little deeper into a band, a record store or a venue. And it's not just plain text but different players quoting about the topic of the chapter. And that makes it a really interesting read. Well worth your money! I'm struggling my way through the In Effect book as well, that is just... woow, history! More on that in another issue. Razorblades & Aspirin #13 dropped as well. It's no secret that I draw a lot of inspiration from this one. Loved the Jerry A interview! A new name for me, and a nice first meeting, is the Collective Memory #2 zine. They cover a lot of different musical grounds with The Fight being the closest to my cup of tea. Other bands were new to me (Truth Cult, Power Age, G.I. Bill and others). Nicely written, nice lay out (comparable to BOD), everything here to look out for #3! And last but not least, there's the No Fuzz zine. Following the high contrast cut and paste style we know from Boothaeven, but where Lowie tends to keep it light and interesting, No Fuzz goes for an overwhelming all page filling approach. Not saying that's a bad thing, saying it's different and I'm more for the Boothaeven approach. Musically No Fuzz covers the OI spectrum. And another newbie, Big Dog issue 1. Quite entertaining chattis with Sion and DBNO head honcho Fabio. And then some cool pictures and stuff. A zine clearly searching for it's own identity and I mean that in a positive way! Looking forward to issue 2.

Notable mentions: No Comply from France in french, the latter being a minor for me so I can't tell you much about the content. Other trades still on the 'to read' pile: Absolute Truth 1 + 2 and Celluloid Lunch 6. More on those in issue 11 I guess?

Musically it was an interesting autumn as well. Pick up the following asap: Acaustix demo, new White Stains 7", Yleiset Sytt 7", Anti-Machine 7", Urin 7", Unidad Ideologica 12", Quarantine 12", Spy 12", Nasti 12" and that Anti Bodies 7". There you go, there's actually a lot more to pick up but I wanted to limit myself to 10 titles...

Aaah, off we go, issue 10! Keep the faith! Kristof



NUKKE

When the name Nukke first passed by on some DTakt & Rapunk post on instagram I was drawn to the layout. The second time I kept staring at the name until suddenly the Kaaos link ringed my bell. That was reason enough to dig a little deeper and check out the songs. Great metalpunk with a touch of that deathrock chorus and a smart protesting throat. When the record dropped I didn't hesitate to reach out to Jimmy and ask about Nukke's plans...

Hey guys, what's up? You just released 'No More Peace', a beast of a record, congratulations, how do you feel?

Hi Kristof, thank you for this interview and the chance to tell our side of the story. NUKKE is a band shrouded in mystery that came out of nowhere, so it is good to give some context to it. I have mixed feelings about this record because so much went wrong, it was recorded in 2019 and obviously COVID ruined the chance of it being released on time. We had to sit on this one all this time, then the factories were delayed as hell due to high vinyl demand. Also, it is a weird time to have a new band because there is so much detachment from the "normal" world and what it used to be like. But it is finally out and we want to take punk by the throat. It has been a pleasure to see the record all over the world and have artists that we respect, as yourself, praise it. It means the world to us to have this sense of accomplishment.

Why Nukke? What does Nukke mean? I know it's a song by Kaaos, was that your reference?

Firstly, because of the KAAOS EP with the same name, yes! That ep is a huge influence on me and I fell in love with the name from the get go.

Secondly, it means "puppet" in Finnish which works out really great with the theme of the band, a dystopic feeling of being a puppet controlled by society's crushing grip on humanity as a whole (and COVID has been the ultimate proof of this in an ironic way I suppose).

Thirdly, it looks similar to the word "nuke", a word that is closely related to hardcore punk since the beginning and I thought it would be a clever play on words with "nukke" and "nuke", hence the title "Nukke'Em All". I love seeing these plays on words and references in punk.

I love that KAAOS ep, great choice! You were mentioning COVID, how has lockdown affected you, Nukke, and maybe your songwriting (including lyrics) for Nukke? Did COVID hit hard on your hometurf?

COVID ruined all our plans to release the record right away but it also gave us time to think things through. It gave us a chance to record a new EP as well which is heavily influenced by the quarantine. I lost my job and it was a very difficult time for me mentally, but it gave me the strength to grow in new directions. It hit pretty hard in Portugal as I'm guessing it did in most other countries.

The new world disorder revealed its ugly face.

So how did you cope with everything mentally? Have you found a new job as of yet? COVID pushed a lot of people over the mental edge and now they just made new restrictions

in Belgium, no lockdown, but lots of restrictions. Gigs are being cancelled again as we speak... What's your forecast, and how does your personal future look?

It was a real struggle because COVID coincided with a mental breakdown that I was having in which I lost everything and had to start anew. Luckily I was able to find a job that both coincides with my world views and is not stressful at all. My new work is related to holistic health which is something that I take very seriously since I've been vegan for almost 18 years now. It saved my life then and it saved my life now! The system wants you smoking, drinking, doing drugs and eating fake food, if you comply with that they are winning, so being healthy is punk as fuck.

The future looks bleak. These restrictions are a mindfuck because the powers that be always change their views at the last second, it is like they give you hope that everything is under control then at the last minute "oops, we have more cases now, so we have to go back to restrictions". This is tiring and serves the purpose of wearing the collective mind down, in my opinion. This will keep on going for a while because once those in power have power they won't relinquish it, they will use and abuse it as long as people follow. The virus totally exists and it is harmful to some segments of the population but the biggest virus is the fear that was implanted in the collective mind.

Above all I'm glad to read you're back on track now man! So Nukke is a two piece band, thinking about that I can only find advantages. Touring in a regular car with all your gear, agreeing on riffage, new songs, artwork... it's always 50%. What was the main decision for keeping it a two piece on your side? And how do you make the record sound so powerful (without bass)?

The core of the band is a two piece, which is the recording line-up so to speak. The less people involved in the band making process the better. This is something that we came to learn from years of having bands. Fewer distractions and more focus. As they say "a camel is a horse designed by committee".

And since Nukke plays quite intricate music and I wanted a timeout from drums, we are getting help from close friends to have a touring line-up. It's hard though find people one can trust to play your stuff, but we got some young amazing musicians to help us live. Hugh is sticking to bass live as it is his main instrument and where he strives as a player.



So the recordings (and songwriting) is you (Jimmy) handling drums and vocals and Hugh playing guitars and bass? And you guys have been playing together in bands before if I got it right? Which bands exactly?

Yes; the core of the band is the two of us. I handle the visuals and direction of the band aesthetically and Hugh handles the songwriting. We have played together for a while now, mostly on undisclosed black metal projects but we did a GISIM worship band together called Systemik Violence, but we both left that band. Then individually we play in several other bands from punk rock to black death metal.

The idea for NUKKE came when we were touring in Italy with our black death band and I basically made Hugh listen to WRETCHED and then the spark was ignited. We got home and recorded right away. Had loads of fun doing so.

I also like how there's some deathrock / chorus touch to the guitar sound. Anti-Metafor (your labelmates) have that as well. Where did you guys get the mustard? What are the biggest influences musically for Nukke? I'd rather describe your music as 'punkmetal', with riffage even drawing from some cold black metal outfits...

The idea to use chorus came from the Italian hardcore bands from the 80's, they had a lot of cold ambience due to the pedals they used, which in turn coincided with our love for early black metal bands. I would say that the obvious base for our sound is ANTI CIMEX, BROKEN BONES and ENGLISH DOGS, then Hugh brings in a taste of VENOM, BATHORY and HELLHAMMER to the mix and I bring a lot of Finnish hardcore vibes like MELLAKKA, KAAOS and BASTARDS. It turned out to be some kind of dystopic metalpunk with bleak atmospheres and lyrics but more in a kind of VOIVOD way rather than the regular "Mad Max worshipping" bands like INEPSY.

What does the HC Punk scene look like in Portugal? I heard some great stuff coming from Portugal but I heard scene wise that it's kinda splintered? Are there a lot of gigs with HC Punk and D-Beat bands? I know you guys and Dishuman in that style...?

Portugal is a small country that moved from an authoritarian rule to provisional military government to a representative democracy just recently in 1974. There's still a "small village" mentality here in which there is gossip and shit talking behind the back constantly. People focus more on others' lives instead of their own. And the punk scene is that in a nutshell, because it reflects those ideals. Sometimes counter-cultures fall in the trap of mirroring in a smaller scale the dynamics of mainstream culture and values instead of creating their own... There is no real unity, there is no real activism, and once you start speaking out and unmasking this cesspool of inactivity, people just shut you out and ignore you.

The scene here is mainly about doing drugs and getting drunk. That's not what punk is about for me. For me punk is about politics and it should remain that way especially at the brink of an authoritarian regime disguised as capitalism. I once played at a punk festival and I was the only vegan there and got mocked for being so... that's Portugal in a nutshell. You get mocked for fighting for a cause and having a voice in the punk scene.

As for the punk scene, there are some cool newer bands here:

- DISHUMAN, kids doing DISCLOSE worship and they are not even old enough to drink, I wish I would be playing D-beat at that age like that.

- ANTIOMIA, this fastcore band that plays stuff like RICCORD, VOID and ELECTRO HIPPIES.

- SCATTERBRAINIA, a catchy as hell punk rock banger like DEAD BOYS meets DEAD KENEDYS meets AMYL AND THE SNIFFERS, in which I drum as well.

- NAGASAKI SUNRISE is also a cool new band that plays Japanese influenced heavy metal punk.

- CORRUPTED HUMAN BEHAVIOUR, stench as fuck

dudes playing BOLT THROWER riffs to a SACRILEGE backbone.

Then you have older bands like DOKUGA, SIMBIOSE, DESKARGA ETILICA, VAI-TE-FODER and a couple more I'm forgetting.

Let's jump to the artwork for the 12". That was done by the greatly talented Matteo Coreal. I love his artwork, like clinical collage with a dystopian feel and still keeping it open and interesting. Why did you choose to work with Matteo? And is the visual side important to Nukke?

I met Matteo and instantly fell in love with his work and with him as a person. He deserves much more attention to his work. He has a vision that is truly his, a mixture of collage, dystopian visuals and brutalism that is unmatched. I asked him to pay homage to DISCHARGE, DISCLOSE and GISIM in the artwork and he was able to do so with his own twist.

Images are really important in punk bands, I would say, not really the "how you dress" part but what you want to convey aesthetically and sonically through the records, flyers, merchandise, etc..

I think you can create a world of your own within that visual identity. Take for example bands like AMEBIX that crafted a world within themselves that you can instantly recognize and recognize in other bands that follow their footsteps.

For us I guess it is a bleak vision of a future that no longer exists for us as humanity and the need for aggressive liberation.

I love how you state it like that! I totally feel the same about punk logos and such, that's why I wanna take a closer look at that 'peace sign' logo. Who made that one? I like how it feels broken and resembles the Crass logo in some way. And why did you decide to work around that Peace theme?

The broken peace sign was also designed by Matteo Coreal. I requested a striking symbol that one could imprint on the subconscious mind, that one could easily recognize as NUKKE's.

CRASS is a great example of a band whose symbol will forever hold the knowledge and power of an anti-authoritarian idea. Another one that inspired us was the TOTALITAR/



DISCLOSE cover in which a yin-yang is broken like a mirror. Such a powerful image, that conveys a powerful message. For us the broken peace sign and the "No More Peace" theme is centered around not wanting to take any more chances and striking the system on the jugular.

Well I love how you move that message up front in everything, the logo, the artwork, even side A and B for the vinyl 'Never' - 'Peace'... It all breeds nihilism in a negative and dystopian society. You draw influences from writers for your lyrics? I am totally getting some Orwell 1984 vibes.

Orwell is a huge influence on me and my writing, as much as HUXLEY, SARAMAGO and BURGESS. Orwell also made a huge impact on me "visually" and that was translated to @violence.paranoia where I turn the ideas of the novel into images and artworks.

Movies like BLADE RUNNER, CHILDREN OF MEN, DARK CITY, VIDEODROME, STALKER and AKIRA also played a part in constructing this identity.

Also, DISCHARGE was a great influence on the dystopic end of things as well. Their lyrics, artwork and overall bleak vibe in the early albums foreshadowed these dark days we are living in.

Basically, any kind of art form that functions as radical commentary on the direction our lives are taking and serves as a warning against some element of contemporary society.

The Nukke'lear theme and dystopian theme is definitely present in the song 'Nagasaki werewolf'. Everybody knows about Hiroshima because it was the first atomic bombing, Nagasaki was the second, a mere three days later. Why did you choose to write around that second bombing? What are those lyrics about?

That song is a metaphor that warns about the side effects of nuclear war on the psyche of the human race. A man that turns into a werewolf under a full moon and becomes irrational with only the fight or flight response represented here by the fear and irrationality of a post-war society. I chose Nagasaki instead of Hiroshima just for stylistic purposes. Both were important events in human history.

And another lyric I was curious about, 'Warmongoloid'. What's that one about?

This is a song heavily influenced by VOIVOD's "Chaosmøngers". It sees a leader of a corrupt and powerful nation become a hybrid being, half-man half-warmachine, in an AKIRA kind of way, thirsty for war.

The record was released on

D-Takt & Rapunk, how did you end up on their roster?

We love PARANOID and what they do has some similarities to what we do, so it is a fitting match to be involved with Jocke from PARANOID who runs D-Takt. I just sent him an email with the record, explaining our intentions with it and luckily he loved what we did and decided to take a chance on us.

I know it is a huge risk to release something on vinyl from a new unknown band but he took a chance on us. I will forever be grateful to work with someone so dedicated to punk as Jocke is.

What a pleasure to be among a roster with so many influential bands, makes you feel that what you do matters, you know?

You were stating earlier you guys already wrote a new EP during lockdown. What are the plans with that?

Just finishing up on that EP and then we are good to go, get everything in place and release it to the world. It will be a bit more intense and a bit more ripping. We are really excited about this one.

Well, I'm definitely looking forward to hearing more. I also hope to hear the 'No More Peace' LP live at some point. Are you working on a tour for next year?

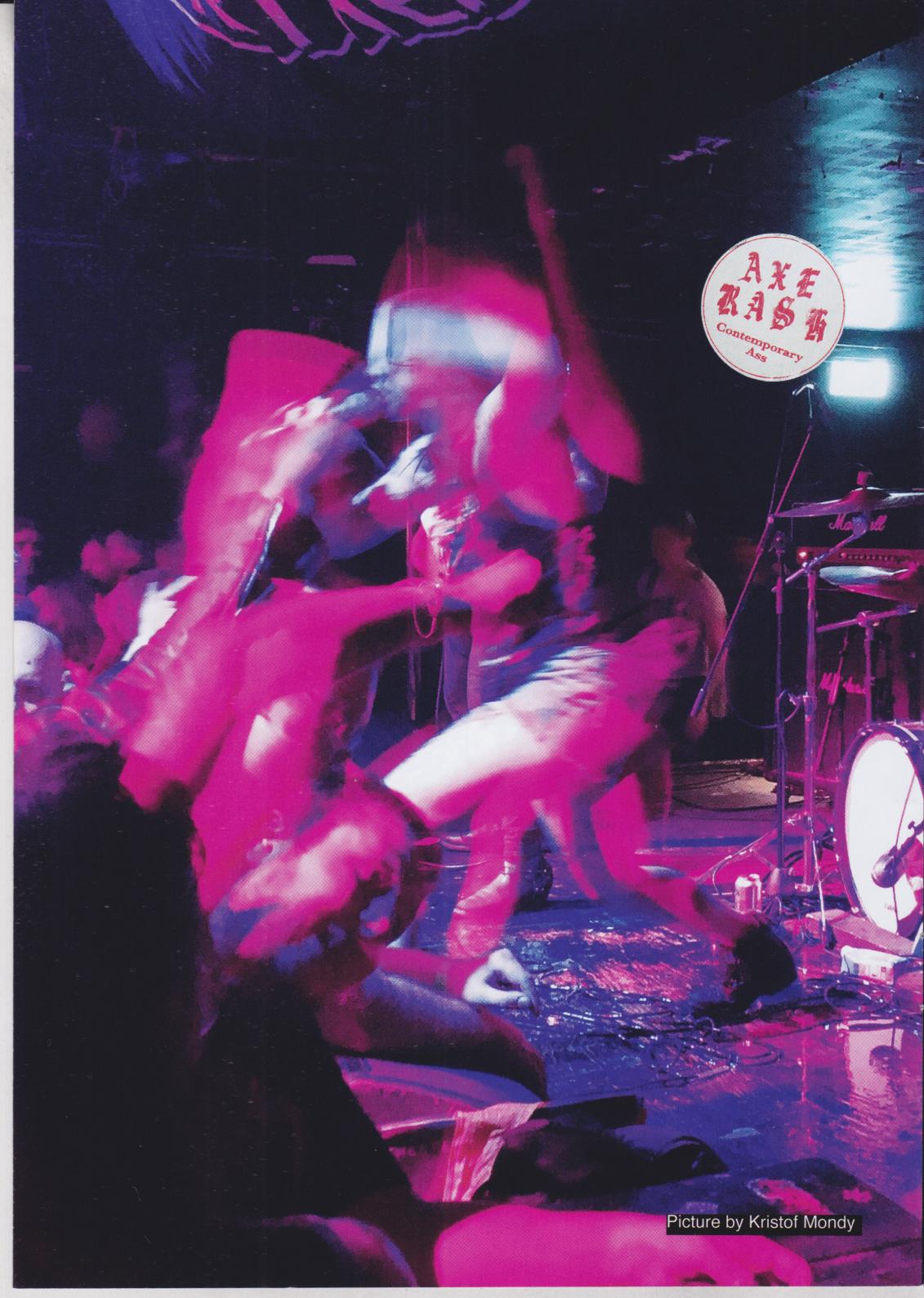
We want to tour and already have some contacts made in regards to that. We will do it with cool ass bands that we love and respect. But obviously, its impossible to be certain of that due to the new restrictions, but one way or another, expect us to tear shit up live.

Aaight, I guess that's it, except maybe this. What if you could set up your ultimate dream show? Which 5 bands would be playing (tell us why you'd pick those bands), where would it be located (inside / outside, city?) and would there be any side amusement (cage fights between this and that guy)??

I'm only going to stick to active bands otherwise it would just be POISON IDEA + DISCLOSE + GISM + ANTI CIMEX + MELLAKKA ahahaha. I guess I would love to play a show under a bridge, like the ones that are going on in the US now with QUARANTINE + SCARECROW + LOCKHEED + SECRETORS + MURO, just because these are some bands whose records I'm digging at the moment.

As a side "amusement" I would just have punk art exhibits and a screening of "Earthlings", unless you want to go absurd and have a cop shooting range ahahaha

Hahaha, I guess we would run out of bullets in no time! Thanks for doing this man! This was a highly entertaining chat. Thank you Kristof for your kindness and interesting interview. Keep doing what you are doing and pouring your blood sweat and tears into punk.



AXE
RASH
Contemporary
Ass

Picture by Kristof Mondy

AXE RASH

I've been familiar with Axe Rash's musical endeavors for quite some time now. Solid releases is the least you can say. But They turned my head after seeing them live for a first time (K-Town 2019). You haven't experienced the real power of Axe Rash if you haven't seen 'em live. After seeing them a second time at the 2021 K-Town edition I was completely sold. The rage, the sheer power, the intensity they create both on- and in front of the stage... It was pure HC Punk madness! And I thought that was solid enough to start a conversation with drummer Leo about the Axe Rash journey up until now...

So Axe Rash. What's the story behind that name? Getting a rash off some axe doesn't feel common? Either way, tell us the story of how you got started in the beautiful city of Stockholm?

Hah, the name refers to the deodorant AXE, it might have some other name in europe? We formed the band back in the beginning of 2015. Hilda reached out to Agnes, who at that time was living in Uppsala. They had met on shows and neither of them had a band at the moment. Hilda brought me along to the first rehearsal. I had a few riffs, Agnes had a few riffs. I think we wrote some of the demo songs that time. I convinced them that Erik should play the guitar, as I do 90% of the times I'm forming a band. Haha, so... the first song we finished was called Nerd Bash. The idea was to have a whole Jock Theme around the band. We were gonna wear varsity-Jackets and shit. If you wore AXE deodorant when we were teenagers, you were a jock, basically.

Haha, yeah the deodorant has the same name over here but somehow I didn't connect the dots. So you were mentioning your switch from guitar to drums when forming bands. All of you have been in bands before? What bands would be on the 'ex-' list? And for you Leo, you're a multi-instrumentalist? Which position in the band do you prefer and why?

Me and Erik's been in a couple of bands together. Some still, exist and some don't. We had a band called Pissjar that we haven't buried officially but it's obviously dead. As of now, us two are in three bands together, haha. Axe Rash, Power Face and a new band called Holy Spirit, sharing members with Vidro and Anti-Metafor. We also have a karaoke cover band called Jerka Kaj and the copycats, haha. Hilda and I have shared some impulsive projects as well. We had a band called Svin that did two demos and toured a lot during 2015 or something, and later on Hilda played bass in Lickers with me on vocals. Agnes does the vocals in Hagi! I've always played a lot but drumming is the only thing I'm really good at. But I'm a quick learner. I'm an ok guitar player and I also play a lot of piano at home and in my work.

Damn you guys are responsible for 25% of the contemporary Swedish punk scene! Just kidding, Let's take a look at that scene. The Scandi punk and Swedish

overall HC Punk scene, has become quite a household name. I remember back in the nineties I was looking out for shows of Abhinanda and then later Refused and a shitload of other Swedish bands. And then of course there's the always present Anti-Cimex legacy. Is that something you feel too? What were the first Swedish HC Punk bands you guys and gals got in touch with? I absolutely think that being a Swedish punk band people will get you some extra attention. The scandi-hardcore legacy might play a part in that but I'd rather believe it's because Swedish bands tend to deliver now. 2021. I mean, sure, everyones interested in punk from the US, from Japan, from Sweden etc. But at the same time - when something interesting is happening in the scene in Spain, in Italy or in France - people turn to look that way, right? Question though: are Swedish bands allowed to suck and still get recognition the same way that US-bands are? Don't get me wrong, there's a shitload of great bands from the US. It's just that... I mean ANY BAND that comes from the US can snap their fingers, have a euro-tour and pull a good crowd, right? I'm not sure we could do the same. None of us have had a thing for the Umeå 90's scene. It never appealed to us. I got into hardcore through more melodic bands like Asta Kask. Some of us started listening to classic Swedish 70's punk like Ebba Grön.

I totally hear what you're saying! Yes, US bands get a lot of chances in Europe. There are bands with only one (average) 7" that toured Europe for three weeks, got back home and quit the band. Why is that? Are we so in awe of US bands? I mean, all respect, I can name a lot of US bands that are insanely good, but I can name a lot of Euro bands that are equally as good. So are we still seeing the US as the mighty, big country across the water? (Maybe I should ask a US band why they're so attracted to Europe?)

The cynical me believes that the main reason punks suck up to the North Americans is because they dress and act cool on instagram. But on the other hand - the US is and has always been the epicentrum of rock n' roll music. On our short US tour other bands' drummers wiped the floor with me every night. Not to brag, but that usually isn't the case in Germany. My guess is that it's harder riding around playing D-beat in the US due to the lack of child support, paid vacation, sick leave

and whatever. So if you're not a real die hard nerd - you quit. It might be a matter of prioritising as well. The Americans don't have nearly as good of a subcultural infrastructure as we do in Europe. Germans can't rehearse all day, they're busy cleaning band hotels and cooking food (for US-bands, haha!). I'm just spitballing here, but that would explain why the US bands are so keen on coming over here, wouldn't it? Touring the US is really shit compared to touring mainland Europe in many ways.

When I prepared for this interview I scrolled through your bandcamp, and found an entry in may of 2015. The 'Nerd Bash (raw mix)' song you mentioned earlier. Reads like a coming of age story and sounds a bit different than the punk you play now. Looking back to that beginning period of the band, how do you feel about music and lyrics?

Yeah, again that Jock theme, haha. It's not 100% silly though. We were talking a lot about how the tables turn when you grow up, when kids who spent their teens reading lands the good jobs while the "cool kids" who're busy partying might draw the short straw in the long run. On the other hand: two out of four members are teachers today - make what you want out of that, haha. I think that first demo is good but it's a lot different from what we're doing today. Starting the band we had a snottier approach both musically and lyrically. We were more influenced by straight up punk bands like Negative approach and Poison Idea, whereas today we're leaning more towards a d-beat psychosis type of punk sound. We still play a few of the first songs live but a lot of them are hard to fit into the set.

I'd definitely say, in the bigger spectrum of HC Punk, you can hear that switch in your discography. However I'd describe it more as an evolution, not? So the Jock theme, lyrics... How important are lyrics for Axe Rash? What are the overall lyrical themes, like in the discography?

You'd have to ask Hilda, she writes them all. But I think they've grown to be more important with time. I would say we have a red thread thematically that you wouldn't find in any other punk band though.

Hilda: I'd say that the lyrics have a wide spectrum. From bashing nerds and peeing on cars to political songs about gig economy, my own beefs in the hardcore scene, anxiety and action movies.

But I don't think anyone ever hears what I'm screaming. So in that sense the lyrics aren't very important to Axe Rash. On the other hand at least some of the lyrics mean a lot to me and it is through the lyrics I channel the energy I have in the music. The few songs with really bad lyrics usually also come with a worse live performance. I need to feel like I have something to communicate, even if no one ever understands what I'm saying.

You mentioned that half of Axe Rash are teachers nowadays. Spill the beans, who, what courses, what drove them? For the record, I think it's awesome. At the same time (and this is an open question, not me questioning the situation), how do they rhyme their Punk life in Axe Rash with teaching? Is there a place for punk in the Swedish school system?

Yeah, Erik is a (soon to be) gymnasium teacher in history. I'm a music teacher in middle school, ages 9-12. I've worked with kids since I was 20, in different forms and love educational work in general. Teaching and touring is a great combination since you get all the leaves off. It adds up to 13 or so weeks of paid vacation a year. My students are not interested in punk at all,

haha. But me being a punk probably has an impact on my ways of being a teacher. We do a lot of songwriting practices and I always encourage my students to write critical lyrics from their point of view. I'm not sure if the other teachers would've let the blues banger "I hate school" slip, haha.

There should always be room for discontent! There's a new EP ready to be unleashed on Adult Crash. Tell us something more about that (musical influences, lyrical themes).

It's great as fuck! In hindsight I think the LP was a transition to a sound we really feel comfortable doing. We found something in the longer, pulsating (static if you will) songs on that release and we've continued on that note. It might sound pretentious but writing the new 7" I think we've been focusing more on the vibe, the atmosphere and general feel. A non-punk would probably think our whole discography sounds the same but we've allowed ourselves to try and make the songs a bit more epic, haha. Bigger riffs, longer parts.

Well I love it when a song gives you the feeling it's building up to some explosion, but at the same time I get kicks out of those short bursts. A song slaps you in the face and by the time you realise what happened the song is over and another song starts. Is that formula out of the way for Axe Rash? Or can we still expect those short(er) songs as well? Either way, I was listening to the 'Gig Life' song on bandcamp. And from the second all of the instruments hit the first note I got face slapped! :-)

Great to be able to offer a good slap! No, nothings out of the way. We're restless and so far each release has offered something new so I don't think we're stuck in any formula. But hey, keep an eye out for Holy Spirit if you want short bursts of d-beat punk. We're recording soon, I promise!

Holy Spirit, I'll write it down and be on the lookout! For that new

Axe Rash EP you

worked with Ellen

Alström (or

is it Ellen

Lejonkatt),

why

exactly?

What

is that

draws

Axe Rash

towards

her art

(is there

a bond



with the band?). The Contemporary Ass (great title by the way) artwork seems more 'colorfull' at first glimpse, but at the same time it feels very grim, unawkward to look at. Like looking at a clown and knowing he's up to no good, IT or Gacy style... And then when you look closer it's like staring into purgatory... What's the artist's and Axe Rash take on this piece of art? And do you feel artwork is important to bring the lyrical message across?

The artwork is not unimportant to us, but I think we rather see it as a way to get the musical message or overall vibe across than the lyrics. Ellen did the artwork for our LP as well and we love what she does. In a punk context her stuff is not cool in a classic sense, it's something else than a mixture of the common subcultural icons, you know: skulls, atom bombs, chains and what not. But like you say, still grim, chaotic and raw. I think that suits us. We're not comfortable acting, looking like or presenting ourselves as a classic d-beat band, a classic hardcore band or what have you. We're weird and art is too. Perfect. The fact that she hasn't done tons of art for other bands within the scene is a plus as well. Standing out is fun, right?

I know there's also some split with Therapy (Atomic Action records) on the table. How did that one come about and when can we expect to hold that in our hands?

Yeah! Therapy reached out to us and we said yes. Now, both the split and Contemporary Ass are delayed. I honestly don't know why, and really can't estimate how much longer we have to wait. But the split rocks. We wrote two songs quickly, recorded them with Staffan from heavy metal champions Century and had Jonas Blakkodge mix and master them.

So two weeks (referring to August 21st) ago you played the K-Town festival in Copenhagen. How did that feel, how did you live to that first 'real' show in quite some time, 500 people attending the fest, Axe Rash being the headliner, I was living through it from the side of the stage, enjoying every second of the set. I can only imagine for you guys, on stage, seeing the audience go crazy... Tell us about it.

A total blast! We'd gotten around to play a couple of shows already since the pandemic thing started slowing down, but K-town is always something special. You forget how many friends you have that you basically only meet at bigger kinds of gatherings, and seeing everyone again and watching good bands was such a treat. With Agnes living in Malmö we never got the chance to rehearse before the show so at least I felt a bit nervous but it felt like we did good. We've never gotten such a huge response from the audience before as that night, truly sick!

Which K-Town performance did you like better? 2019 where there were 1200 people attending and if I'm not mistaken you had fire on stage? Or 2021, 500 people attending and all of them got lost in the music?

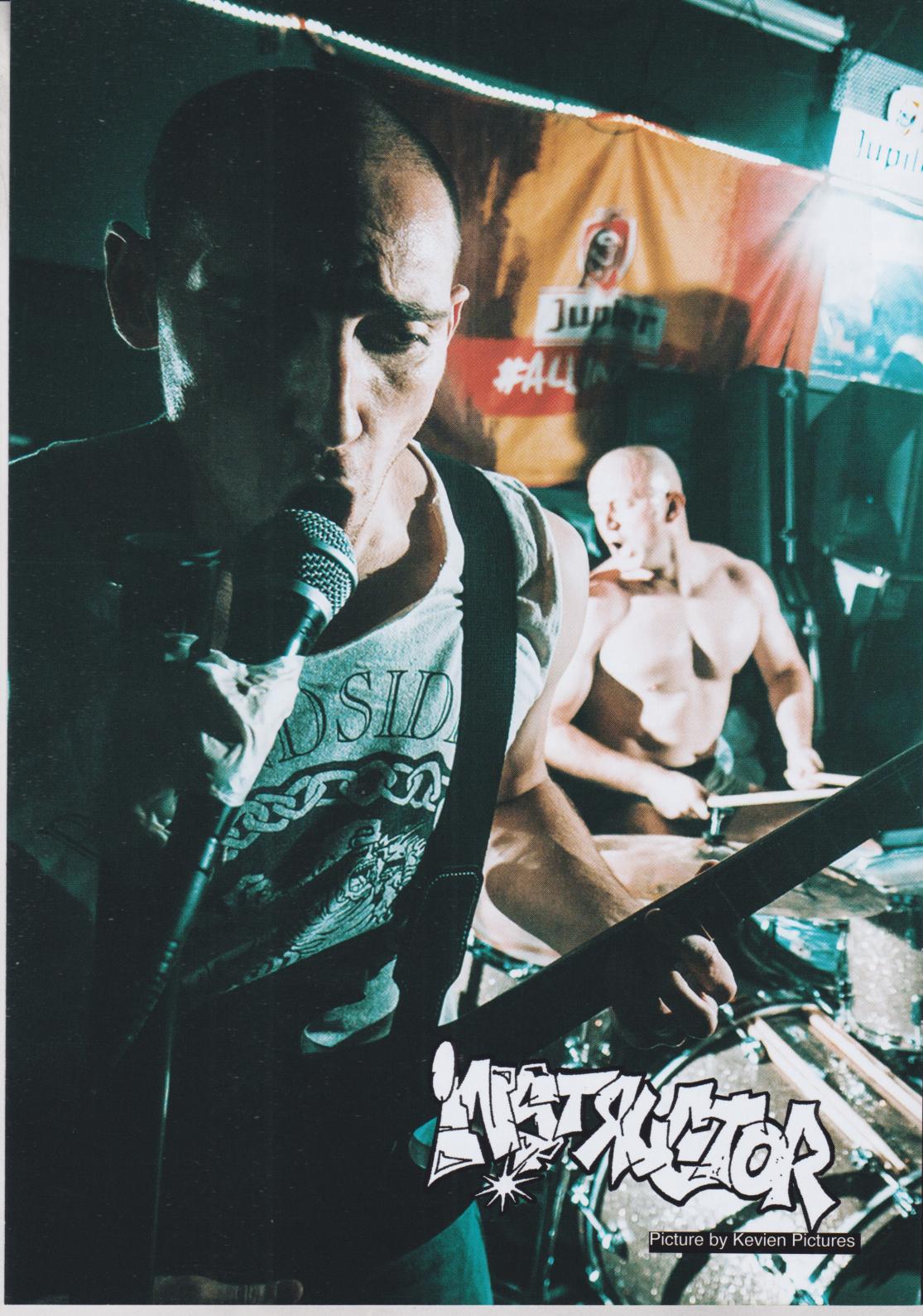
For me, 2021. I played like shit 2019 and even if the fire thing was epic in its own way, I think the whole band would agree that the 2021 show was our peak experience with the band so far. We played great, the reaction from the audience was sick. It was insane to me.

It was insane to anyone present there, believe me! Hey I think I covered all I wanted, is there something I didn't ask you were hoping for? Well then, you might as well answer

the question! Thanks for your time Leo!
Can't really think of anything! Thank you so much.



Picture by Kristof Mondy



METALICATOR

Picture by Kevien Pictures

INSTRUCTOR

Instructor has been around for quite some time now. I remember sharing the stage with them early 2019. They had just recorded a demo and put up a bandcamp. Only a week or so later they announced Quality Control out of the UK was going to release the physical version. And they kept going ever since, blowing new life into the once so vibrant Brussels HC Punk scene. Topping it off with their latest output 'Private Execution' and a performance at this years Damage Is Done fest. I asked the lads some stuff about Instructor and about the Brussels Scene at Cobra Jaune...

So tell us about Instructor. Hailing from Brussels, a shithole to some, home to others. What's the HC Punk scene like?

D: Before the pandemic, we had a lot of good shows that brought quite a lot of people from outside Brussels, but the scene in itself is quite small. There's only one other hardcore punk band in town that is active at the moment: On Fire (ex-Cease Fire). Three new bands should play their first show soon though: Terre Neuve (ft. 3/4 Instructor), Fucked Up Minds (a demo is already available on Bandcamp) and Tesson. This being said, over the last few years, things changed a lot. There was a real lack of places for small shows around 2015-2018. At some point, we just got into a dive bar in one of the noisiest areas of the city... And that was it, we started doing shows at this place called Cobra Jaune. They have nothing to do with punk/rock music, they're mostly into Congolese and Brazilian parties. But they were welcoming from day 1 and things went much better there than in a lot of "alternative" places. So we started booking a lot of shows at Cobra Jaune, under the name A Place In the Sun, and it gave us the motivation to start a new band too... And so Instructor was born in late 2018.

But there was a time when Brussels was more active right? Bands like Deviate paved the way in Belgium. Length of Time and Arkangel made several appearances abroad. There's always been a MAG4, and until quite recently the DNA pub hosted shows on a weekly basis. What started this decline within the scene? People moved away from Brussels?

D: The first Magasin 4 was a crucial venue for hardcore and punk back in the late 90's. The 3 bands that you mention as well as other bands such as DBNO or Backstabbers became quite big thanks to this venue and its scene, check them out if you don't know them yet. In the mid-2000's when I was a kid I've also seen some of my first shows there, like Subhumans, those are still great memories of course. Around 2010, the place was sold to be transformed into luxury apartments, and its crew moved to a much bigger warehouse in Brussels and kept the original name. Even though they did some cool shows since then, to be honest I think this new configuration doesn't come close to the older one.

The DNA was a bar with a lot of rock shows but they never hosted that many punk shows. It was a great hang-out place though with a lot of good parties and in that way it also had an

impact on the scene. But after a few changes of management it got sold as well and now it's still a bar but it has become nothing more than a money laundering place, it's always empty. All in all it's hard to say what started this decline within the scene, but the lack of venues definitely had an impact on it. Besides, as for everywhere else, I guess it's a matter of generation.

Let's go back to Instructor, how would you describe your music? Where did you get the mustard?

X: We wanted to do late 80's NY-inspired hardcore; bands like Breakdown, Dmize and Cro-Mags. We all love these bands and I personally feel like, although these bands and their music existed in a specific time and place, their essence is truly timeless. Hence maybe why you see so many bands to this day trying to emulate the aesthetic tropes of bands of that era.

C: Instructor is Bert at the guitar, Xavier at the bass, Dario singing and me at the drums. We're all good friends since a while and wanted to start this new hardcore punk band together, we easily agreed to go that route.

Since you mentioned Breakdown. Is that where you got the influence for the logo? The graffiti lettering. The Graffiti culture was huge in the NYHC scene from the mid 80's. Brussels also has some great graffiti culture within the colored city center. So how did that logo come about? Are you guys active within the graffiti scene?

B: As I remember we wanted a graffiti logo even before having the final name for the band. It's just something we all liked a lot but at the same time we really wanted to avoid ripping off a band's logo, copying the typo etc. A friend of ours, Max, does all our logos, we guide him towards what we want and he shares his ideas as well, this is pretty much our creative process for everything, music and artwork.

None of us is active in the graffiti scene (would we tell if we were though?) but I personally grew up with graffiti being a big part of our youth, in music, on the street, with friends on the toilet walls etc. I was always really bad at it, thankfully we got talented friends.

D: We've also had a lot of artwork help from our friends Dave Decat and Griffin who are involved in a zine called Sauvage among other things. Check it out if you're curious about the current Brussels graffiti culture. Shout out to our mate Nicky Rat (aka Nicou Peteur) too who's killing every band's artwork 7/7.

Nicky Rat is an artwork god for sure! Anyway, the link with NYHC goes a little further. I sometimes hear hints of early Agnostic Front and some Cause For Alarm tunes in your music. That makes Instructor accessible to both the NYHC adepts and the more HC Punk oriented scene. Which gigs suits Instructor best? You were mentioning Cobra Jaune earlier where you hosted bands like Extended Hell and Stigmatism amongst others. Both more from the HC Punk oriented scene, but you also did an Arkangel show. What's, to you guys, the difference between both shows / different attending scenes?

D: The Arkangel show at Cobra Jaune never actually happened. The show was initially planned in October 2019 and got cancelled a first time because of their drummer's appendix. It was then moved to March 2020, but this new date happened to be the very first day of Covid measures in Belgium, so it had to be cancelled again. Since then we've been waiting to reschedule it but the guys of Arkangel are quite busy with other bigger bands (Hangman's Chair, Wolvennest, La Muerte ...). It should finally happen in March 2022. Anyway, we booked this show because we all like Arkangel, but other than that we're not into metalcore. We never played with other metalcore bands either I think.

X: To all you hardcore kids reading this that aren't into punk: fuck you, you're all clowns and we hate you.

Haha Xavier's message is pretty clear. But I wasn't really looking at metalcore. I mean if you're looking in Belgium there's bands like Permanent Debt, Hetze, Haemers and Raw peace, and then there's bands like Pebble, Mindwar, Chain Reaction and Animal Club. I dare to say that all these bands aren't that far off from each other. The first four are more HC punk oriented, while the latter are more HC. I know you have set up more shows for the style of those first 4 but how do you see it?

X: The Brussels' hardcore « scene » has a more punk element and we definitely have more of an interest in the punk side of hardcore when we put on bands at Cobra Jaune, and even when we put on more hardcore hardcore bands we tend to bill them with punkier bands.

Case in point: we put on Worst Doubt from France, with Raw Peace amongst others, and you could tell it by how people danced and were experiencing the show. It wasn't your average horseshoe pit metalcore gig... Thank god!

D: Musically we all like various subgenres and without surprise this reflects in the shows we host as well. As for Instructor it's always been obvious we didn't want to focus too much on such labels because we never wanted to be a rip off of this or that band for instance.

We're finally going back to playing shows! If I'm not mistaken you played 2 shows in the 'opening' weekend. How did it feel? This is what HC Punk thrives on, right? Live shows, meeting each other?

D: Yes, early September we played in Antwerp and at home, the Cobra Jaune. Both shows were packed so that was a great return. A few months ago we also had a show near Toulouse in France, in a barn with Rixe and Trap.

C: That one in Toulouse was an unexpected banger during this shit period. 10/10.



Well you guys definitely stayed active during (semi) lockdown. You released the 'Private Execution' ep in April of this year. When did you write and record this? And is there a physical release?

D: Private Execution is a live recording, done at our rehearsal studio with a few friends doing backing vocals. There's old and new stuff on it, all of it was arranged late 2020-early 2021 during the lockdown, hence the title. We released it on tape via our label, Maximum Labour records.

May I ask what themes Instructor's lyrics cover? Does living in such a big city influence your lyrics? Songs like Parasite and Parasite 2.0 or Terror Zone are probably not about the joys in life right? Are there specific writers (lyrics or books or poems) you feel inspired by?

D: Lyrics match the music and thus they're mostly aggressive or negative. I'll quote the 2 songs you mentioned: Parasite is about annihilating the enemy ("Back home, your safe zone under my sole") and Terror Zone is about making hardcore great again at our HQ ("Another night at Cobra Jaune - Dive into the terror zone - No one's safe between these walls - Close the door and get your dose - The watch dogs are unafraid - 'Cause we belong in this frame - Laugh from top of the food chain - Here's the last stop of your weak game"). Again this whole declining city landscape has a huge influence on the band and is being reflected in the lyrics as well. No specific writers apart from that. And we're not afraid of a bit of controversy as well, since on the other hand a lot of bands tend to have boring lyrics in my eyes. So if hardcore kids or gutter punks don't like it...

HC bore-outs, I can relate to that. What do you need in HC to keep it fresh and not be bored? Is there a specific genre or band you'd definitely run away from?

D: I avoid wannabe obscure bands who drop several merch designs online before playing their first show, most bands who label themselves Oi because they tend to be pure crap, Discharge rip-offs (with a Disbandname), and the list goes on ...

B: Generic beatdown bands with no connection to hardcore or punk, and streetpunk, every band ever.

X: I think most European hardcore bands nowadays suck ass and I can't even tell you why. I'd rather listen to Urban Waste & Disciplinary Action.

I must compliment you guys on the covers included on 'Private Execution'. G.I.S.M., Cro-Mags and Cockney Rejects. Wow! Explain these choices!

C: Honestly we didn't think that much about it, we all like these songs so we played them. Voilà.

Fair enough! For Instructor you worked with Quality Control in the past, how did that come about? Is that the label that suits Instructor best?

D: Quality Control indeed released our first demo, in June 2019. It was great to work with them, they definitely know their shit. A few months later we were invited to play at their fest called Damage is done in London, along some of the best European hardcore punk bands at the moment, it was one of the best fests we've been to.

After that, we released 2 tapes on our own, via Maximum Labour records and those were also distributed by Quality Control. This helps a lot of course.

You were mentioning Maximum Labor Records as Instructor's own label. What's the goal with the label? Are you looking to release Instructor material solely? Or are you looking out for other acts as well?

D: We started the label just to have a label name for the second Instructor demo, that came just after the QCHQ one, so initially there was no plan apart from that. Nevertheless at the beginning of lockdown I got into an obscure early 80s punk/Oi band from Brussels called Buzz Buzz and the Common Oi. I had already seen a few pictures here and there but that's all. After a lot of time spent getting in touch with people to get info on the band, I can finally say that their demo LP is going to be released around December via Maximum Labour. It's totally unreleased material and a complete archive booklet is almost ready too so that's gonna be a great release.

Well that's a cool thing! I'm not familiar with the band but I'm all in favor of documenting a scene. Are you approaching this the Radio Raheem kind of way? Their reprints are amazing, right?

D: We could say it's similar to what Radio Raheem does, but in this case the band is absolutely unknown, except among the few people who saw them live back in the days, and they didn't play a lot of shows. Again, there is no recording available at the moment, even on YouTube or whatever, so for basically almost everybody this release is gonna be the first introduction to the band. The booklet will come out as a small fanzine, it's about 10 pages with text in French and English, pictures and posters... It doesn't focus on the band only since it contains a lot of anecdotes and stuff on the 1980-1983 Brussels scene.

Well that definitely sounds promising! We're almost at the end of our chat here. Tell us what's coming up for Instructor? Is there an LP in the making? And what will 2022 bring? Will we be able to avoid that 4th COVID wave and party like it's 1999 again?

D: We're really excited to be playing in London late November and then we'll be playing in Brussels mostly, at the Haemers release party and some shows at Cobra Jaune, with Cuero and Pressure Pact among others. Apart from that we have some new songs in the making so a vinyl release would be great for 2022, even though most pressing plants have crazy delays at the moment. So who knows what will come out.

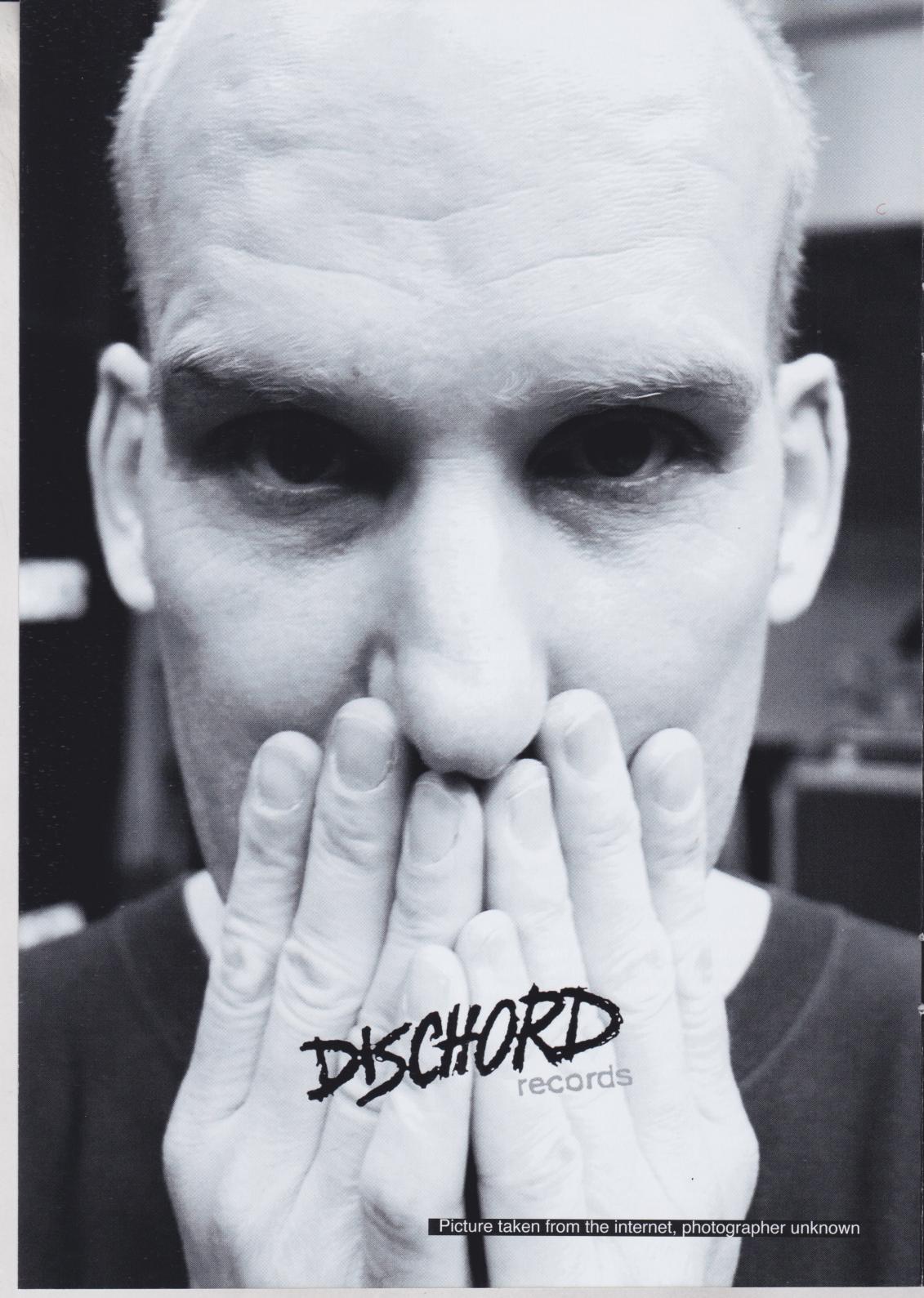
Cheers to the Cobra Jaune Skins and Punks and Dogs and Freaks, people who come to the A Place In The Sun shows, all our mates who know what's up, Nicky Rat, Max Lab,

Dave Decat, Griffin, Dris and Dorian the French sound men, Junior the mosher, De Lange, Hamit, Marco, Daniel, Freddy and the CJ family, Kevien Pictures and Nick the cameraman, Ball Of Destruction fanzine. The City Is Dead, Raw Peace, Slavemaker, Asphalt Martyres, Crucified, Arkangel, Tesson, Fucked Up Minds, Quality Control and the New Wave Of British Hardcore, Worst Doubt, Rixe and the Toulouse lads/Boisterous Skin Firm... And most importantly Instructor would like to send a big fuck off to people who think Brussels is the new Berlin, fuck your coffee shops, fuck your moustache, fuck your garagepunk/powerpop/whatever scene. We ain't gonna stop, fuck you.

Thank you for your time!



Picture by Kevien Pictures



DISCHORD
records

Picture taken from the internet, photographer unknown

IAN MACKAYE

Here's part II (part I was published in issue 9 of *My War*) of my interview with Ian where we discuss Punk archiving, Fugazi, The Evens & Coricky, the alcohol industry ruling the club circuit, Discord records catalog numbers and the Void or Faith question...

Hey Ian, welcome back (and thank you for taking the time to do this!). So we were mainly talking about Minor Threat in our first session, for this second session I wanted to shine a light on your other endeavors. Let me jump right in, are you working on this archive, is that flyers, discord, Minor Threat...?
Yeah... it's all of that. I have 35 years, sorry 40 years now, of punk correspondence. I got all of that organized in a database, I have thousands and thousands of flyers and posters, I have thousands of fanzines, I have thousands of photographs, hundreds of tapes, it's a pretty significant collection, yes.

What kind of tapes are that? Like label submissions, band practices, private purchases...?

All of the above. Well I didn't really buy commercial cassettes as a kid, I bought records and then later, when I got older I bought cassette tapes. But I made a lot of tapes. We all made compilation tapes for each other. or demos. I have hundreds of demo and I also have all the real reel masters from the Discord back catalog. I actually, hold on (ruffles in the back and reaches out to take something). This is the 4-track tape to the Minor Threat single (holds the reel as pictures in *My War* issue 9). So that's the multitrack for that and this (holds another reel that says Grand Union) is another multi track and it says Grand Union but it's actually the Skewbald stuff. I actually went down to the studio the other day and Don and I were listening to these tapes (both Minor Threat and Grand Union & Skewbald) and they have live vocals on them. So it's funny to listen to because there are a lot of weird and incomplete versions of songs, like we tried to do this one song and we kept screwing it up and I was singing the whole time, pretty interesting. I also have many many many tapes, hold on a second (reaches out for more stuff in the back). Like, I have thousands of Fugazi tapes, over a thousand live tapes and dozens of rehearsal tapes. We were constantly recording demos. So yeah, I've got a lot of stuff.

So that's where those Fugazi live shows keep coming from?

Yeh, we're still working on that. Sixty more shows and about 400 more pictures to put up!

Man, Fugazi did so many shows, I think I've seen you 2-3 times in Belgium? You were like the most

productive band I've ever known. At some point you released one record a year I think?

Yeah, we played Belgium many times, so that's definitely possible if you're old enough. (:-)). As for the records, I guess in '88 we put out our first ep, '89 we put out 'Margin Walker', '90 we put out 'Repeater' and '91 we put out 'Steady Diet' so yeah. Then '93 was I think 'Killtaker', '95 would have been 'Red Medicine', '97 was 'End Hits' and then I guess '99 would be the 'Instrument' soundtrack and 2001 or 2 we did the 'Argument' record (Ian states this from the head, no screen, no catalog printed he's reading). And then there's also a couple of singles in there too. Yeah, so we were in a fairly good clip.

Was Fugazi so natural as a songwriting band? I mean that pace? Like a train that never stops? Did songwriting go that easy?

Well I wouldn't say it was easy. Fugazi was a full time occupation for us. Like when we weren't touring and we were in DC, we would usually practice 4-5 times a week for 5 hours a day. We spent a lot of time together and worked really hard. And on the songwriting level we really worked well together.

Well that 'working well together', you could see that on stage. Every performance I saw, either live or on the internet, every performance was so tight. And then I mean the band on stage but the audience as well, there was like a special vibe going in the room...

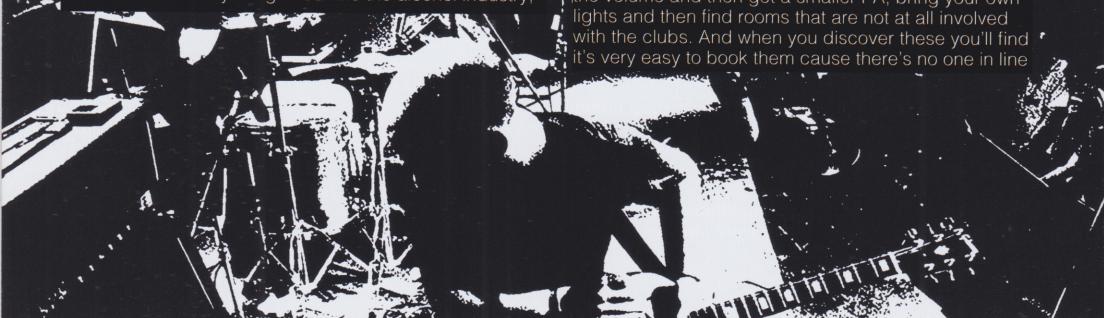
Well that has actually always been the idea. I always say a show is the product of a band and the audience. If the audience was not there the band would be practicing. And with Fugazi we endeavored to create a space in which people felt safe and hopefully we could together leave the building, create something that would let us transcend the space. A lot of spaces where we were playing, especially in the later years, were pretty standard commercial venues just because of the number of people that were coming to see us. And the idea was that we could get into a certain situation where the walls would disappear. I think people didn't always understand our position. Like we always tried to do low door prices. We were trying to remove the owners of entertainment from the equation. We didn't want to entertain people, we wanted to make shows with people. So if people were paying 30 or 40€ to see us, well we better play 'Waiting Room' right? But if they're only paying say 12€ or 8€ or whatever would've been reasonable at the time... Our thinking was, that's just the key to get us all into the room, but then we don't feel we have to entertain, it just makes it possible for something to happen. One of the reasons that we were so dead set against violence, is we found violence to be a terrible distraction to transcending

behaviour. Like when you have a fight in the room, all the energy goes into that. And when people are worried about getting injured all the time they can't get free, so we really tried to speak out against that. Some people went 'oh they don't want us to have fun'... Actually they might be right, we wanted them to have something more than fun, more than entertainment, that's true. Again, this would have to be a combined effort between the band and the audience, I'm not saying that we would create a transcending situation, the band, but we the band and the audience can do it. There's a lot of stuff on how we worked. Like we never used a setlist ever. We just knew over a 100 songs. And to keep it spontaneous and interesting we would just go on every night and... We knew the first song we would play, we agreed upon that and after that it was off to the races.

That's crazy. I always felt very connected at the Fugazi live shows I witnessed. Especially where the audience is up close and the whole room is one moving unit... Let's look beyond Fugazi. After Fugazi you did some other bands with your wife Amy?

Well first off was 'the Evens'. We played Belgium I guess 2004 and 2005. And then 2006 we went to Asia, Australia and New Zealand, then down to South America. In 2007 we got pregnant and then our kid was born in 2008, and that kind of held us back from international touring. It's interesting, we didn't have any problems, we wanted a kid, that was something we wanted to do. But most bands, when there's a kid involved, it's not that both parents are in the band, you know? So we thought when we have a baby we can still go on tour, but I don't know. Like when you're on stage and the baby is in distress... We would have to bring someone with us, which means we would have to change the economy. Like the way we operated, the Evens, we didn't play clubs or commercial venues. We toured with our own lights and a little tiny PA and we had to find alternative venues. The idea was to escape the tyranny of the rock club because it was clear to me that the form of expression that I engaged with, and Amy agreed with me on this, but our form of expression, music or rock music, had been consigned to the bar. To the alcohol industry. And the alcohol industry was making up all these rules and decisions about the setting and who could come. You know in America you have to be 21 to get into a lot of clubs and I think that's a perversion. It's insane, you know, to use a ridiculous example, imagine you're a poet but the only place you could speak your poems was in crack houses? That's how it felt to me. Like for some reason as soon as someone strums the guitar, someone has to open a beer, beer has to be sold immediately. And it's like that around the world! With Fugazi I remember we would try to do shows without a bar and the punks would be furious. 'Oh no, we have to have a bar, it's just impossible not to have a bar!'. You know, this is not an ethical issue. It's not a morality thing, it's not even an anti-alcohol thing, it's an anti-alcohol-industry thing. I feel like the alcohol industry,

over the years, has created an illusion in which you must have alcohol at a music event. And it's good for business, frankly. When I grew up as a child here in America, I used to think that there were three things absolutely necessary for life: air, water and milk. Now air and water are absolutely necessary for life. Milk is not. Now why on earth did I have in my mind that milk was an absolute necessity? It's because the dairy industry has perpetuated that notion. When people get married in America now you have to get a diamond on the wedding ring? When did that start? I'll tell you, it started in 1930 / 1940. Prior to that people would never wear a diamond ring, that was ridiculous. The diamond industry, they're the ones that created this notion that love could only be represented by a diamond. That's absurd. And the alcohol industry has perpetuated the same notion. That music must be attended by alcohol. I think the idea is that it's a lubricant that makes it easier to get to the place where music would take you naturally. Like sex actually. Alcohol is also superglue into that world. But really, it's just an unnecessary lubricant. And I don't care about it for the most part until it creates a situation where people and certain members of society are not permitted to see the bands. So I don't know about you, but I imagine if I asked you if music was important to you when you were 15 years old you'd probably say 'Yes!', you might even say it was the most important thing at 15-16 years old and that it was even your reason for existence. So what would it mean for a band like Fugazi, that say was super important to you, and we came to your town or a town nearby and you're 16 years old and you can't see the band? That is a crime! I always played all ages shows, that's been fundamental since the beginning. But then towards the end of Fugazi's gigging, I became aware of the fact that, without fail, almost 99% of the shows we played were being held in venues in which the primary economy was based on self destruction. Which I found to be perverse. And Fugazi discussed and looked for ways to navigate, circumvent that industry. So we really discussed getting a circus tent and thought of ways if that would be possible. And of course it's fucking possible but it's a lot of work. Fugazi had this problem because every time we played a 1000-2000 people were coming out. So it makes it much more difficult. You can't be very nimble, you have to think about the safety of the people. With The Evens however we were small. We were just a two piece, and I realised that one of the fundamental reasons that bands were pushed into clubs has to do with sound reinforcement. Volume. Clubs typically are sound proofed or have arrangements with neighbours so they can have loud music. So turn it down. Volume does not equal power. In fact some of the most powerful experiences in my life were in near silence. So I don't think volume equals power. I think it can be powerful but it's not one and the same. So turn down the volume and then get a smaller PA, bring your own lights and then find rooms that are not at all involved with the clubs. And when you discover these you'll find it's very easy to book them cause there's no one in line



to book. There's no booking agents, none of that bullshit. I can't believe what's happening to music today, where every band needs to have a manager and an agent. I've never had a manager nor an agent. Obviously when we came to Europe I had people to help us, but that's not an agent. I said we're gonna go here, here and there and then talk to venues. But I find it surreal that bands, especially bands that think of themselves as punk bands have gotten so beholden to that part of the industry, because agents control access. If you don't have an agent you're probably not gonna get a show at a club. it's not free and I'm interested in freedom.

Totally agree. It's the same here in Belgium with a couple of bookers. Like, you can bet your money on it that when a band like Converge comes over they play the same venue every year.

I think that has to do with relationships. Let me be very clear on this, I don't think that clubs, booking agents or managers or any of that are bad or evil. It's when it gets locked down and you have no options, that's bad and evil. If you can't play shows because you don't use a certain kind of infrastructure, that's wrong. I have dear friends who own clubs, and I've been to a lot of rock clubs and I have friends in the music world. And I don't think they are bad people, I don't wanna try to shut them down, I just think that music should be everywhere and bands need to keep kicking. Trying to find places and just remind people that, yeah you can play a show at the club or you can play a show in the lobby of some old movie theater. You know? We played thrift stores with The Evens. And now with Joe, Amy and me as Coricky, we played a youth center, an old church they've turned into an art space, and we played basement shows. Obviously it gets more complicated if the audience grows but that's part of the work, it's a creative response. If you have a lot of people coming out to see you then you have some leverage. So for instance Amy and I were asked to play the 9-30 club here in Washington. And we don't play rock clubs, but it was the 30th anniversary of the 9-30 and I first went to the 9-30 in 1980 and I've known them, they're friends of ours and they have always been super generous and nice, like getting us into shows and stuff. And so they asked us for their 30th anniversary event. And they asked if we could play 2 or 3 songs. And Amy and I talked about it (it was for The Evens) and we agreed, but we agreed on the stipulation that we would not play on the stage, we would play on the balcony facing from the other direction, cause we can play anywhere cause of our little tiny PA as a two piece. And it was supercool. And they were recording the whole event, like cameras everywhere and a truck outside, but because we were on the balcony we were excused, we weren't wired into the PA (laughs). And when we started playing, everyone turned around, they were stunned. Someone announced us, like 'here are the Evens' and we started playing from behind them on the balcony.

So I think there are ways of making it interesting to continue to make music surprising. As you pointed out, there are a lot of bands touring for a long time and there was a point of time with Fugazi and I would look into the wall of upcoming acts and it was surreal. Like all these familiar punk and hardcore bands but also reggae or hip hop bands. And I was seeing these same names in every venue. And I had this strange sensation, like, do you know what an 'eddy' is in a river?

No?

Sometimes in rivers there will be like a cutout on the side of the river where the current gets in and spins and all the

flotsam and jetsam spins around, like the trash and foam and it spins round and round and round. And that's how it felt like! Like we're all forever gonna be playing the same clubs. And the venues themselves, they affect behavior. So there are certain places when you're going like, ugh, I don't like going to that place, so it kind of puts a stigma on the shows there. There are some venues where people are more likely to get into fights. And there's some places where, like with The Evens, we did a show in a church, in the sanctuary, and everyone sat there quietly. The physical space affected the people's behavior. And you have to think about that. And so when you play rooms where people have never ever seen a show, they don't know what to do, and I find that super interesting. Anyway, this could be like a book, you better ask me something else.

Hahaha Aight. So Coricky, with Amy, The Evens also with Amy. How does that work out? Doesn't that weigh on the private relationship? No fights over miscommunication about this or that show?

Well you've been in bands as well right, so did you ever get into an argument with a band member? Yes you did, it's a fucking band. Bands are relationships. So it's the same with us. We get along pretty famously, I've known here for 30 years, we've been together for 20 years and we're pretty tight. And we're different kinds of musicians but something happens when we play together. I can tell you now that with Minor Threat, the fighting, the arguing that went on in that band, it was insane! And Embrace was super intense and intense fighting. And With Fugazi, our relationship was very deep, we were super close people but we were really up each other's business, really intense. So maybe if anything, that aspect of playing with Amy is less than with the other bands. Partially also because we don't really give a fuck. The band and our music is really precious to us but we don't feel pressured by anything. We can play if and when and where we want to. We also don't allow people to film the shows, the only documentation is what we record and put out. We played like 5-6 shows (Coricky), those stopped because of the pandemic. But it's interesting, no camera for us. It really changed the whole feeling. Like documentation is so suffocating. Amy and I were actually talking about this last night. It's so interesting that the people who come to see Coricky haven't got any idea what to expect. And before the record came out they even had no idea. And something else we've been doing, and I don't know how long we'll be able to pull this off, no door price, it's pay what you want. And that way there's no ticketing, no advance sales. I was talking to a friend of mine who came to see us. You know, people are interested, our first show had 500 people. So people are waiting in line to get in. And a friend of mine was standing there, thinking 'I can't believe I'm in a line'. Not even knowing he would get into the show, it had been years since he had that sensation. And once he was inside he was excited cause he had no idea what it was going to be. He had never been to a show not knowing what to expect cause he looked them up ahead of time and it was available. And he said that was a really interesting and refreshing experience. I like it because it just changes the mood. We don't have people with their whole camera set up all the time.

They can be distracting, right?

Exactly!

Eight something else. The Dischord catalog. When I was researching I found that you're a returning artist every 10 numbers or so? Correct? What is that about?
Yes. In the very beginning, Jeff and I were gonna be on every tenth release.

(note of the editor: at this moment Ian has no list in front of him, the following all comes from the top of his head...) So number 10 is Out Of Step, number 20 was Egg Hunt. But after Egg Hunt Jeff and I stopped being in bands together. So 30 was Fugazi, 40 was Minor Threat I think and 50 is Skewbald. 60 is Steady Diet, 70 is Killtaker, 80 is Instrument, 90 is the Argument, oh no Red Medicine. 100 is the Teen Idles first demo (with Jeff again). And then 110 is End Hits, 120 is that the Argument?

That's Instrument.

Oh yeah, the soundtrack. You know, the reason the movie is 80 is that we had held 80 to do a live record. And then we just couldn't agree on which live record, so we gave 80 to the movie and then 120 is the Instrument soundtrack. 130... is that the Argument?

Yes!

Then 140... is that The Evens?

No, it's Minor Threat's First demo.

That's right and then 150 and 160 is The Evens. 170 is the two songs by The Evens and then 180 is the Odds, by The Evens as well. And then 190, that's Coricky. And then the 200 box, so yeah, I'm on every ten. And it was just a coincidence that Jeff and I were on ten and twenty. And I guess it was Jeff that said we should just do this, we're always on the zeros. But then we stopped being in bands together so we decided I would be on every tenth.

So Egg Hunt was the last endeavor of you and Jeff, right? Or was it Skewbald?

Well Skewbald was recorded in 1981 and Egg Hunt was recorded in 1986, but Skewbald was released later, that was 50. So yeah, Egg Hunt was the last time me and Jeff made music together.

And you never felt the need to pick it up again?

No, because we just drive each other insane.

But he is still working on Dischord with you?

Well he's less active. He lives in Toledo, Ohio now. But he still owns half of the label. He's a silent partner.

Cool. So The Evens, Coricky... never thought about playing something more in the vein of Minor Threat again?

No. To me, the place where that music came from that turned out to be Minor Threat is the same place that turned into Embrace and the same place that turned into Fugazi, the same as The Evens, the same as Coricky, it's always the same place, it just evolves. For instance, when you, like... How old are you?

45.

So if I was to look at your handwriting when you were 10 and then when you're 15-20-25, I would assume it would have changed, correct?

Yes

Well, same hand coming from the same place. For me I don't think of music stylistically. When I was in Minor Threat that was exactly the music I wanted to make, that would come out of me. But I wasn't thinking in genre.

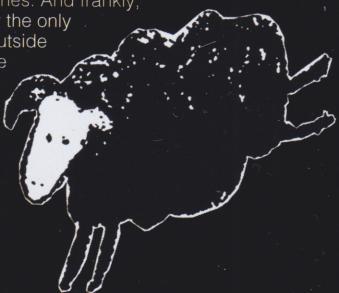
For me it's retrospective to think in terms of 'don't you wanna do music like that, your HC band?'. I don't fucking think like that, I found that weird. When people go like 'I have a hardcore band and a reggae band' I find that bizarre. To me, I don't want it to be a cookie cutter. I just want to make music that sounds interesting to me.

And people said to me oh The Evens, that's the band you do with your girlfriend or your wife, and I would take offense. Yes I am married to her, but she's a fucking badass musician! And furthermore people would say 'well it's sort of a folky thing'... it's not a folky thing, it's a fucking band and we play intensely and I would say, if you had seen The Evens, in many ways those shows were more punk than what a lot of people think are punkshows. Like we were right there on the floor up close and super confrontational. And that's exactly to me what Minor Threat was. Minor Threat wasn't playing a smoothed out rock club, we didn't have a merchtable, we were doing the thing.

For me I'm always interested, like when I come to a field and there's a path, a clear path with tarmac or cement and there's rails and lights and all that stuff. Or there's a weird and windy path that goes into the woods, I'd probably take that path. The woods one, I'd like to take the machete and cut the track, I'm not looking to follow other people's tracks all the time. And that's how I feel about music. Everything I've done in my life is trying to continue and make it interesting, and it's not interesting to me to do what's already been done.

I totally follow that. And I think that's the strength of Dischord, that's what people are looking for in Dischord.

You know, I'm not a nostalgic nor a sentimental person. But I do feel history is important. Especially punk history, cause it's the one that'll be lost to the industry. Cause the industry controls the narrative. For those of us who took the other roads, the small roads, the B roads, the dirt paths. Those are not gonna make it to the rock 'n' roll hall of fame. It's the people who end up getting up to the paths and choose the paths that were already made, and then drive their machines down those paths, they're the ones who end up in the hall of fame. And I don't care about the hall of fame or whatever version. I'm not looking for that kind of accreditation, I'm not care about that. What I do care about is the idea that people and kids or whoever, can create something on their own, in their own way and feel free. And that's an important thing to remember. And if the corporatization always covers up everything, then people will forget that. So for me the reason that I keep the archive, the reason I reissue old things, the reason that I do this interview is to give people some perspective that it was and still is possible to work outside of the lines. And frankly, I think it's really the only hope to work outside the lines. Cause the lines are only drawn to generate profit for a certain number of people.



I can only nod, I follow you. So I have two more things. We were talking about playing in bands, tension building up and stuff. Same with Jeff. I was just wondering, you never played in a band with Henry, right? Yet you are best friends.

Never thought about forming a band together?

Well in the very beginning Henry wasn't really a music guy. Well he loved music but wasn't a bandguy. Like in the very beginning when I was in the Slinkies he was there at my very first show. And then with the Teen Idles we called him the fifth Idle, he was our roady. There was actually a time we were practicing at Nathan's house, and Nathan was the singer of the Teen Idles and his mom called him upstairs. So Henry would sing like the Teen Idles songs with us, but we never did a show together. But when the Teen Idles broke up, there was this band called the Extorts, younger kids who we had just met, and the singer of the Extorts was Lyle Preslar and he didn't like singing. He was a really good guitar player. And I got to know him and so I asked if he wanted to be in our new band with me and Jeff and that ended up being Minor Threat off course. The other 3 members of the Extorts asked Henry to sing and that was S.O.A. But we never... You know, Henry and I have been friends for quite some years, I met Henry when he was 11. So we've done a lot of time together. For instance, in 1978, Henry and I took a Greyhound bus to California together, I was 16 and he was 17, to go skateboarding. Every time he got a job he would hire me. I worked at a pet store with him, a movie theater with him, a skateboard shop with him, an ice-cream shop with him, you know, we always worked together. But we never thought of doing music together. We have different approaches to doing music. But I talk to him all the time, we were in touch just yesterday. I love that guy, we're probably closer than we've ever been. In two years, we'll have 50 years together. That's crazy.

One last question. A discussion that always pops up, a Dischord related one. Void or Faith?

You know, I love both bands. And to me it was never a competition. Uhm, I always called it Faith / Void. Void was... they were phenomenal. They were a crazy ass band. And that recording was amazing, it was such a great session. And they were at that point, at the very beginning, they

were so unhinged it was so enjoyable. The Faith were in many ways, for a lot of us those days, they were the most important band. They were such a deep and important band. So for me if I had to take just one or the other, I would probably take The Faith. Because my brother sings in the band and the songs, the lyrics, are very heavy for me. I think 'Subject to Change' is the later Faith record, I think it's a great record but I'm a little biased since my brother sang for the band. I would say I love them both. You know it's interesting, we saw the pairing of the two on one record as a really radical and revolutionary way to bring music to people in an economic fashion while not showing disrespect to the format. But what happened was people compared both sides. Reviewers were going 'well this side is good and that side is boring' or vice versa. It just never occurred to us that the two bands would be pitted against each other. That there would ever be a conversation about this. Even in Belgium in 2021. Void versus Faith. On the other hand, if people are talking about Faith and Void in 2021, then I guess mission accomplished.

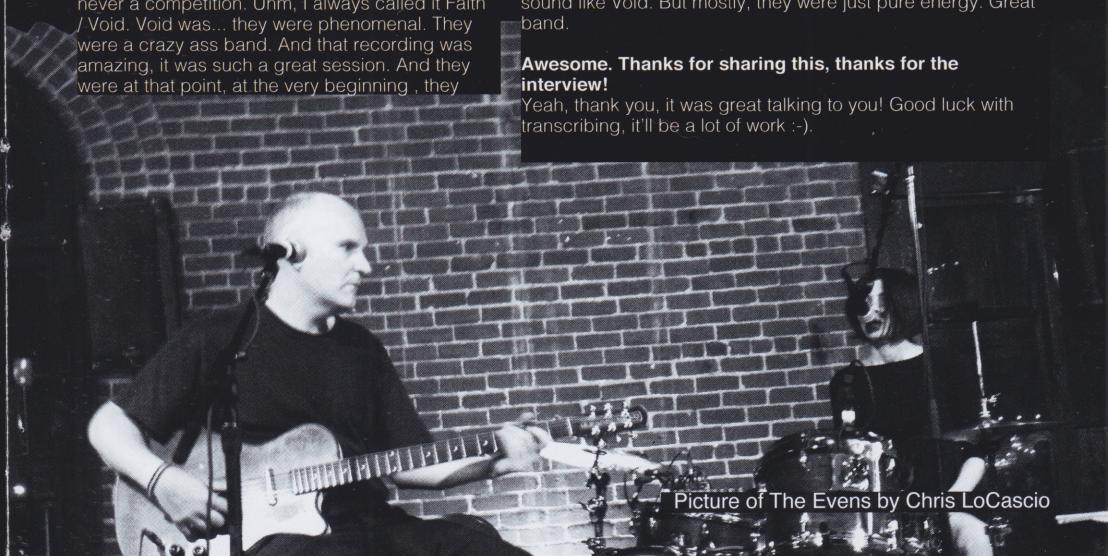
Definitely! I love both sides, but when I must choose... I'm a Void boy.

I get it! Again, don't get me wrong. I love both. Void were really good friends, their drummer, who passed away already sadly, he was just a great guy, we were really good friends. And they were just such an exciting band to know. They were from this town called Columbia, which is 15 miles north of DC, and they would always come down to shows so I got to know them. And then I would drive up to Columbia and just hang out with them and see them practice. So unhinged, like salt of the earth people. Just good, really intense people. So yeah I think that record is amazing. And they did a recording after that and I'm so glad it never came out. The fable third album, but it's whooo, it would've really changed the way people thought about them. I'm sure it's online somewhere to hear or even buy... You know, what I like about music is when people are new to their instruments as kids, their relationships with their instruments are in their early stages. And yet they have this love or this idea they wanna sound like, so they might have some band they think they're doing, but the relationship with their instrument is so weird that what they actually do sounds nothing like it. But it's innovation, they've created something new. Like Void, I think in their minds they were going for some kind of metal thing. But instead what they came up with was something that was... incredible. So many bands wanted to sound like Void. But mostly, they were just pure energy. Great band.

Awesome. Thanks for sharing this, thanks for the interview!

Yeah, thank you, it was great talking to you! Good luck with transcribing, it'll be a lot of work :-).

Picture of The Evens by Chris LoCascio





Picture by Per Warberg

DESINTEGRACION VIOLENTA

When Desintegracion Violenta dropped their demo I was hooked instantly. And I didn't think of the fact that Rafa from Muro, my favorite contemporary HC outfit, was drumming for DV. No. I loved DV for being DV. A super intense, high energy, thriving HC Punk act. Of course, the Spanish vocals only added extra points to that. Being flabbergasted I reached out and asked some questions, Juan answered.

How did Desintegracion Violenta get together? And how did all you guys end up in Berlin in the first place? I see Berlin as a contemporary cultural melting pot. What attracts you to Berlin?

We met during the summer of 2019, at least me Per and Ursula did. I was in the middle of a European tour I was doing with another band called Abuso. We've been in contact ever since. I think it was the same with Rafael. They met during another tour at some Muro show or at Static Shock Weekend or something.

There were several reasons that convinced me of moving to Berlin, basically, the ones that implied my future, education, life quality and personal affections. And regarding migration I see Berlin as a space where real immigrants come with real necessities for their lives and where other 'expats' coming from different countries that belong to the so called global north come to try some luck with their artistic projects for example. There is everything and everyone in Berlin for me.

So you (Juan) originate from Colombia, right? In what way is your future brighter in Berlin than it was in Bogota (or the city you lived in) if I may ask? I'm only familiar with Colombia through soccer (Valderama and Higuita amongst others) or the Pablo Escobar documentaries. The latter mostly show a grim way of life filled with drugs, poverty and homelessness.

Indeed, I was born and lived there for more than 25 years, and everything you say is true. Most of people outside the country have no idea about those social stereotypes built by Media, worldwide politics or irresponsible tourism in Colombia. But what I think people can contribute is not to reproduce those victimizing stories and instead to inform themselves about the extensive history and other attributes of the country. For example, and of course, the music or artists.

To me the Desintegracion Violenta demo kinda came out of nowhere... Who wrote/writes the songs and what are the influences? I heard people describing it as influenced by Japanese HC while I feel like it's totally angry, thriving, drum laden hardcore punk. How do you guys describe the band and where do you get your influences?

We have always been into hardcore since we were young and even when we lived in our home countries,

so the main influences to our project were bands - from the metal spectrum passing by some world wide punk classics to some of the latest hardcore releases from friends or bands that we have seen live, and yes, some japanese hardcore bands. You can't avoid that people that listen to your music feel some references behind it. I am okay with it since it does end up being compared with classic bands knowing that they lived or live in the middle of different social contexts or countries, for example. And for me the sound was some kind of expression of all that kind of sounds I like and have always wanted to play.

Do you remember the first real punk record you ever heard? Which record was that? And what made you go nuts to the extent that you wanted to play punk yourself?

I remember pretty well that the first punk pirate CDs I bought and heard were these two: 'Songs Of Praise' by The Adicts and 'Ingobernable' by Sin Dios. After that I was just enjoying most of the punk and metal bands that crossed my path hehe. Also the fact of going to shows and meeting people into the music network made me want to start bands as well.

Let's dig into the band name? I used google translate on Desintegracion Violenta, 'violent desintegration' a violent splitting of different parts? Could be about science but also on a human level. Being separated because of war... What does it mean to you? All lyrics are in Spanish too, are those Juan's writings or do you write lyrics with the band as a whole.

Basically this name makes reference to the act of being wiped off of the planet's existence. Basically being killed under violent circumstances or against your will. So this alludes to all of those violent acts during human history that keep occurring in every corner of the world today, and tomorrow. And the lyric process happens after thinking about it and sharing the meaning to my bandmates. We all agree on much of what happens in this fucked up world.

When you state 'being killed under violent circumstances' do you mean by act of the police? I heard a lot about the corruption on that side...?

Yes. Under State, Police or by acts of violence committed by other citizens. The level of dehumanization in Colombia is surprisingly unbelievable, and of course the impunity is always the one that wins. It also happens because the social conflicts in the cities or in the countryside involve so many actors like left wing guerrillas and right wing paramilitaries, armies of narco's, police, army, all of them with the people being the ones that stay in the middle of these conflicts. All of this fueled of course because of the huge plantations of marihuana, coca leaves and poppy. I like to say that Colombia is a narco-State because it "fights" the narcotraffic on the public opinion but needs the worldwide and inner

traffic because of the alliances of narcos with some really powerful politicians in the country. I would say that Colombia is a narco-State basically, same as México.

Well when I was talking to Ursula about this interview she said 'foremost, Desintegracion Violenta is a political band'. Your answers up until now definitely include a critical nod to global politics. But what does being 'a political band' mean to you?

I think that I don't necessarily need a band to consider myself as a political being, also the bands are not political, but their acts and expression are, then, is where we see that every act in collective or individual life has a political meaning and context. You can't escape it, even those that claim themselves as apolitical persons (maybe they don't represent any political party, but still being political animals as everyone). Empathy must be an ethical imperative that can use music as a vehicle, just as us.

Let's get back to those lyrics, or rather the song titles (I don't have the full lyrics), those definitely triggered me. Like V.I.S.A.? It's spelled with dots so it's an abbreviation for...? But at the same time, with Juan and Rafa being Colombians in Germany the link towards residing documents and green cards is easily made. What's that song about?

Indeed it is about migration and all those bureaucratic nightmares that you need to fulfill, especially when you migrate from the so-called "third world" countries. I would prefer them to be called impoverished. I am the person that actually resides in Germany, not Rafa, he visits us regularly and we also expect to go to Colombia and do some touring down there. If I am honest, I, as a migrant, went with more luck as other people, as I was just undocumented for a couple of months, but in other cases there are people that literally need to survive as soon as they enter a country of the EU. You just need to see what happened in 2015 with boats full of people trying to cross the Mediterranean or what happens today at the border of Poland with Belarus where thousands of people are getting stranded and trapped in the upcoming winter. Just because they are considered illegal and will not pay taxes. Simply outrageous. That song is about them mostly, not about us.

Well that's definitely a very important topic! The situation at the Polish - Belarus border is definitely getting out of hand! With these migration situations the European right wing politics definitely pop-up. There's been an increasing vote to the right in almost all European countries. How do you feel about that particular situation? Have you been confronted with racial differences?

For me either rightwing or social-democratic states in Europe are based upon a racial superiority that holds the capitalist structure. So in the end, if the balance in the EU countries goes to the far right, it doesn't make that much of a difference. All the time those micro-racisms can be seen in quotidianity and in normal life. Especially in a country with such a high rate of migration as Germany. There are thousands of examples or

cases, but I have experienced and seen some, yes.

And what about the existential feeling in the song title '¿Para qué zapatos si no hay casa?'. Why shoes if there is no home? What is this about specifically?

It is about the homelessness and how it expresses as an urban consequence of ineffective politics of life and death. All around the world. I remember seeing homeless people all my life since I was a kid in the streets of Colombia, a phenomenon that is clearly connected to drug abuse, narcotraffic and public health, and then when I came to Berlin and suddenly I was watching the same, but with the difference of the really tough winter. The quote is a reference to this 1998 Victor Gaviria movie 'La Vendedora de Rosas' ('The Rose Seller' in english) and it is about the harsh life of homeless kids of Medellin.

I also liked how the last song is titled 'El Tiempo'. Made me think about how time moved this last year and a half. How nothing was able to happen except for stuff from home or in closed 'bubbles' of friends... How did you guys experience the whole lockdown thing? You were able to work on Desintegracion Violenta so that's definitely a cool thing...

At that point during the lockdown nothing else cared because basically there was nothing else to do than practice and meet for a couple of hours. Also, it was during a really harsh and long winter here in Berlin.

That definitely was a good thing because we enjoyed every practice and we were doing what we like the most with so much excitement. Can't wait to meet with all of the guys again and record the new songs we made. And then make more songs and play shows the next summer.

On the Unlawfull Assembly bandcamp I read how all proceeds of the demo sales went towards local collectives in support of the ongoing national strike in Colombia... Can you inform us on what happened and why it happened? And maybe more importantly, what can we do to chip in and help?

During the tape release time there was this really huge National Strike happening in all the economical, political and social sectors of Colombia demanding a structural change of life quality in the country. This means a historical debt that is basically about inequality, social justice and peace. We just tried to support with the least we could through donations. Those were like two or three months of really intense and violent protests that left hundreds of people killed by the State forces and Police. Right now, the demonstrations have stopped or are taking a break, but the situation is still the same. And now, Colombia faces a new government election, so it is going to be an important moment where we will see if this representative democracy works. We can share some links where this situation can be explained deeply by alternative media in Colombia and other countries.



Please give us some links, I think it's really important to stay as informed as possible. Preferably information from the inside...

This report from a Colombian NGO sums up everything about the State Violence committed during the last National Strike in Colombia. The report of the 80 people murdered under the ESMAD (an anati-riot police) hand. It is in spanish: <http://www.indepaz.org.co/victimas-de-violencia-homicida-en-el-marco-del-paro-nacional/>

You recently did a small run of Euro shows together with Urin and Kryptkeeper. How did that go in semi post-COVID times? The bands are all close friends and/or sharing members, right?

We played 10 shows in Germany, Poland, Austria and Czech Republic. At the beginning the booking and organization seemed a bit complicated because no one knew if playing shows and crossing borders was going to be as easy, since it was more than two years ago because of this global sanitary context, but at the end it could happen and the people attending

the shows were totally happy and showing support and energy with our acts. My favourite show was in Linz at Kapu, a legendary venue that has hosted so many artists. And yes, we share some people in our line ups, and more than that, we are really good friends.

Friendship is the engine that keeps Punk going, right? Well thanks for taking some time! When will Desintegracion Violenta be back on the road? Is there a mainland Europe tour coming up? And maybe an LP sometime soon? Either way, good luck!

We are planning some tours with more dates and other countries than the ones we played this last summer/autumn. And yes we have some new songs that we will prepare and record to make at least a new release. I appreciate your interest in our project and hope to meet you in a future.

Thank you!



Picture on the left hand page by Isabel O'Toole

STINGRAY

When I saw Stingray passing by on my Instagram feed I was so eager to hear it. Members of ASID, The Chisel, Game... WTF. So I hit that play button and instantly started smiling. What sets this release apart are Tin's deep and growling vocals, sounds like some weird creature from out of the depths.. So I hit him up with some questions, here's what he had to say.

Stingray came as a surprise! All of a sudden LVEUM announced the EP and put you somewhere between Agnostic Front and GBH. What's the musical story of Stingray? Friends finding each other in times of (semi) lockdown? And why did you choose the name of a rather friendly (which the music does absolutely not sound like) fish with a cute face?

First off, basically me, the bassist and drummer of ASID all lived in the borough of Hackney. The guitarist Luca lived about a 40 min walk away in Holloway. With lockdown restrictions lifted briefly we met up and decided to do a band that was local, as all the bands I've been in before had members living in different cities. We jammed the first two songs of the record. They sounded a bit different, I think we were going for Celtic Frost meets Sheer Terror meets Agnostic Front, but the end result was something slightly different.

The name was just the first thing our guitarist had written down in his notes. I've always said the band makes the name, there are some amazing bands out there right now but if you floated the band's name as a suggestion prior, your band mates might raise an eyebrow or two. So Stingray kinda sounded like a hair metal band and we ran with it.

Man you got quite some line-up there. Like some London all star line-up, everyone did time in bands, you mentioned three of you were in ASID, but there's also ARMS RACE, SUBDUED, THE CHISEL, CHAIN OF FLOWERS, GAME... With all those different backgrounds from previous bands, was it easy to decide on which style of HC Punk you would play?

Well since three of us were in a band prior we knew we worked well. We got Luca involved and tried out a few guitarists but ended up getting Nicky in. I hadn't seen him for the best part of a year and he'd been practicing guitar over lockdown. I'd never been in a band with him except one that never made it past the first practise. We already had the 2nd and 4th song, the rest kind of came from there.

Before we dig any deeper, there's a lot going on in terms of HC Punk in the UK right? I mean, there's a lot of attention for all UK bands bringing that NWOBHC. You got some great export products in the likes of Big Cheese (and Higher Power), Chubby And The Gang and in the past Arm's Race and The Flex also did some massive touring in the US. What's the main reason for this (justified) huge interest in UK HC Punk?

Uhm I couldn't tell you the exact reason. People who were my age when I got into punk and hardcore have different ideas about the 2000's scene. I went to proper shows in like 08 late 07 and it seemed like there were a lot more metalcore bands on bills. I think largely the internet has helped, I think we had our

Picture by @callxmexkiller

own bands rather than just UK versions of popular US bands, so there was something different being brought to the table. Venues are a big factor, London had a severe venue drought for a while. Sometimes a venue would be booked for a few shows then cancel further due to fights, injuries or lack of money made at the bar. With more stable venues we can play local shows and host bands from outside the city or the countries. Static Shock Fest brings people from all over once a year, I guess they go back home with stories or bands to tell people about. The bands are getting younger, that's for sure. I'm starting to feel like an old head now.

Static Shock Fest probably helps, yes! As a matter of fact, I'm always amazed you got Static Shock Records, La Vida Es Un Mus and Quality Control in London alone! That's luxury, right? All three labels released awesome international acts. What would be your top 5 releases of those labels combined? And add what attracts you in those releases...

This is a tough one, this isn't definite at all and probably changes from time to time but gonna say a few that I think anyone reading should own or check out.

Static shock put out Urban Blights 'Total War'. It caught my eye cos I remember buying that when I saw them in some squat in south London. The last Perspex flesh record was a blinder as-well I listen to that quite often. Same with that Blazing Eye 7" on LVEUM, they rip. The Sial record they put out is fucking mad. That's probably one of my most listened to non English speaking records in the last few years. For the final one I'm gonna go back to Static Shock and say that the Music City "Pretty feeling" single is a good tune.

Back to Stingray... What's the biggest difference between ASID and STINGRAY? Or is Stingray picking it up where ASID left it? What about lyrical themes, is there a continuation for you?

I think we have faster tunes? Asid was way more punk HC, Stingray is more metal punk. Some of the songs go straight metallic.

In my opinion they are two different bands, ASID I used to sing about drug use and mental health, and failing governments. Some of the same themes made it but I also just wanted some hard metal sounding lyrical themes I came up with in a 'lockdown stoned stupor'.

One song title that stands out and made me curious is 'British Export'. What's that about?

Since Thatcher a lot of industries in Britain have disappeared, a lot of mines, steel mills and factories etc. Since then our biggest export is weapons manufacturing. So as conflicts erupt around the world that may or may not make the headlines, it's often weapons, or technology, developed here and exported to other regions. Where there is war, British made bombs aren't far off...

Reading through the other lyrics, above anything, I get views of a dystopian world (bombed with those British bombs probably). A society that is fighting an eye for an eye while negativity reigns supreme. A vision a lot of singers for HC Punk acts seem to share. But where do you get your inspiration, and I mean, the use of words and language, the rhymes? Are

there punk records that inspire you through their lyric sheet?

And do you tend to adjust your lyrics till the moment you start recording? Or did you get it the first time right?

I'm slow as fuck with lyrics man, sometimes the song has to be near finished for me to even attempt. It's all the same bollocks, gnarly bleak shit. Try to have a few topics rather than vague nihilism, kinda prefer classic thrash lyrics as an inspiration. It's all stoner thoughts ahaha.

Recording was pretty mad. I had a book of lyrics and made them fit, often in your head you can sing more words per verse than you can actually record. For the first few songs I just sat and watched them. It was only up to recording when we fleshed them out properly. And I'm gonna be honest, the last night I was pretty fucking stoned and drunk. It was a fun process working with Jonah in this huge room that had like a piano in it and loads of felt squares and mad rugs on the floor. Felt like an abbey road with the stones.

There's also an artwork dream team amongst your ranks, Tin Savage and Nicky Rat. Tell me, how does that go? You each do bits and pieces for the cover and shirts and whatnot? Or do you divide into front cover for X, back cover for Y?

To be honest, much to our label and the rest of our bandmates, me and Nicky both work and have outstanding commissions for other bands so the art is usually a back and forth thing that's not super planned out. For the next record I think we're gonna try to do something nuts, but we kept it simple for this release.

And I was thinking, you prefer doing visuals for your own band or commissions from other artists?

I think my mind draws a blank when it's my own band and I never know what to do. We have some stupid graffiti logo with some war hammer like character art. Hahaha pretty hardcore. I like doing commissions for others but it can be difficult when people are super vague and then get something they weren't expecting. But it is what it is.

Well there are always people looking for a copy of something you did for another band before, that's when shit hits the fan I guess. Oh well, they'll learn in time not to give tabula rasa to artists haha.

So since the start of this interview Stingray had it's first (and second / third) live show. How did it go? How did people react to the live act? And did I see something of a broken or dislocated shoulder pass by (due to that first show)?

We only played three shows as of yet. I broke my shoulder the night before a weekender with the Chisel so we only played two shows and Damage Is Done. The first two shows were great. We were opening for some solid acts, think the last one we kinda got to play somewhere.

Thank you for taking the time to do this, got anything to add?

We're gonna do a few weekenders on the mainland and play out of the city. We got some songs written, just need a few funding touches and some lyrics and maybe we can think about putting it to waxxx.





Picture by Daniel himself

DANIEL LUPTON

Daniel was the first to trade some copies of the VVOVNDs seven inch several years ago, and he was in the front row ever since the collected 1-2-3 issue of the My War magazine was published. I love what he does with Sorry State Records, I'm a big fan of the weekly newsletter he and his team send out, I always pick up his recommendations, they never failed me. I thought it was time to shine a light on his current endeavors, he was so kind to answer in depth and take my questions seriously. One true punk soul that breeds music...

Hey Daniel, what's up? How do you feel now that the sky is finally clearing above our COVID heads?

Things are good! Of course COVID isn't over, and the world doesn't feel anything like it felt in the 'before' times, but things are certainly not as stressful as they were for a while. I think I have mostly found a good rhythm with life, though I look forward to a time when a simple thing like going to a gig or taking a trip out of town doesn't feel like a big risk.

To the people with whom the name Daniel Lupton doesn't ring a bell. What should they know you from? Past and present? and while you're at it... What does HC-Punk mean to you?

Well, I don't know if anyone should know me necessarily, but I have been involved in punk for a long time. I have been in several bands including Cross Laws, Logic Problem, Devour, No Love, Scarecrow, and a handful of others, and for the past 16 or 17 years I have run a label called Sorry State Records, which has also evolved into a distro and record store based in Raleigh, North Carolina, USA. Especially now that I'm middle-aged (I just turned 42), punk and hardcore means everything to me. I have been obsessed with this music since I was about 15 years old, and I have devoted my life to it. Nowadays I spend all my time on punk rock, running the store, distro, and label during the day and practicing, playing gigs, collecting records, etc., during the evenings and weekends. Sometimes I wonder why I have devoted so much energy to the scene, but it's tough to say. I know that I still love the music (going to my first few gigs since the pandemic has helped to confirm that) as well as many of the people who form this community. I don't think I'll turn my back on punk and hardcore now, so my plan is to work on maintaining and improving the parts of the scene that my life touches.

Were there some things you changed in your approach to punk (either your label, band, recordstore or even something else) during COVID that now pays off? I guess we were all looking for that one golden ticket to keep things moving during lockdown, and on your side I saw quite some stuff moving positively after summer of 2020...

When the lockdown first happened and we had to close the shop, I told all of the employees that I wanted to see this situation as an opportunity rather than as a setback, and that I thought we could emerge from COVID stronger than when we started. While I don't think we have "emerged" from COVID (at least not in the way we thought we would), I

do think Sorry State is in a much better position than we were before the pandemic. Basically we spent a lot of time thinking about why we do what we do and how we could do it better, and we worked hard to implement those changes. While customers might only notice a few things, such as the fact that we now list a lot more used records online than we did before, all of our behind the scenes operations are much more sophisticated and flexible, and everything (for the most part) just works a little better than it did before. We also painted and decorated the shop while it was closed, which is something we had been meaning to do for years. It looks much better now! Ultimately, though, it is our customers who helped us get through the pandemic. Everyone knew the situation was tough for small businesses, so I think people made a point to spend their money with us and to help keep us afloat. This was, of course, necessary to keep paying our employees during the pandemic, but also it was so heartwarming to learn that people cared so much about Sorry State and are so invested in us continuing.

Glad that paid off! I wanna delve into the store side of things later. First I wanted to start shining a light on the Sorry State Record label. It seems like a very busy period for the label, releases popping up or being announced on a monthly basis... What was your goal with the label when you first started? Any label you held as an example back then (and why)?

When I first started the label, it was just an experiment. I started going to punk shows in 1995 and didn't start the label until 2005, so that was a long time experiencing things just from the perspective of a consumer or an observer. I wanted to be more involved, and since I loved records, making one seemed like a logical step. Luckily I chose a great band, Direct Control, for the first release on the label. Starting with such a successful release gave me a big boost. As for inspirations and examples, I always loved late 70s punk and early 80s hardcore the most. I loved the beautiful graphic design and the innovative presentation of my favorite UK punk records, but I also loved the DIY, hand-made aesthetic of underground American punk from the 80s. My favorite labels are probably the same as everyone else's... Dischord, Dangerhouse, X-Claim!, early Touch & Go. Particularly in the case of the first three, I like how they felt more like art projects than businesses.

Over time the label has changed a lot. I still feel a responsibility to document my local scene like Dischord did, so there are and will probably always be a lot of Sorry State releases from North Carolina. I am also drawn to releases that



seem like they might be underappreciated for some reason... bands who don't fit comfortably into a certain scene or who cross over between scenes. I have never had a clear sense of mission or object with the label, and looking back at our 15+ years of history, it's hard to see many patterns. I think the label is just an extension of my personality and my engagement with music, and as I grow and change as a person, the label grows along with me.

As for the label being in a busy period, that is probably due more to business and money concerns than anything else. I am always listening to music and discovering new bands. However, since the world of records is growing at the moment, there is more interest in the releases and it doesn't feel too risky to make 500 copies of a new record, so we're doing it more often. After being around so long, Sorry State has also gained a little bit of notoriety and there are a handful of people who will check out a new release simply because it's on the label. I hope the trend continues because I hate turning down records I would like to release!

I'm glad to hear that you took Dischord as a reference! How Dischord documented DC is probably unmatched, but you're doing fine! So you mentioned your UK punk records setting the bar for what you wanted to do with SSR. Two (recent) releases immediately come to mind, *Mutant Strain* and *Golpe*. Both have a giant poster with great artwork, inlay with lyrics, manifest for the band... Crass immediately came to mind. Was that what you're looking for? But it goes further, right? With that *Golpe* LP you even inserted an extra dust sleeve because the printer fucked up in colors... Are you a perfectionist?

With *Mutant Strain*, Crass was definitely the main influence! Of course we created a Crass Records-style fold-out poster sleeve for this release, and I think it turned out great! *Mutant Strain* is heavily inspired by Crass (even if their music is quite different). They even did an entire Crass cover set one Halloween and it was incredible... one of the best things I've ever seen... I wonder how it would compare to seeing Crass themselves! The members of *Mutant Strain* designed all of the packaging themselves with basically no input from me, and they even printed most of the inserts, including the awesome comic book by their singer Marissa. I should also note that *Mutant Strain* is inspired by Crass in their politics as well as their music and aesthetics... the members do a lot of work with mutual aid organizations and helping the homeless in Charlotte, North Carolina.

For the *Golpe* record, I'm not sure if Crass was a direct influence since Tadzio and his friend Francesco designed all of the packaging for that record. While I am not a perfectionist, Tadzio definitely is. I think the problem with perfectionism is that sometimes you neglect to finish anything since you are always fiddling with minor details... I think sometimes it's more important to just finish something than for it to be perfect

in every detail. I think my tendency in this regard helps to balance out some of the perfectionist tendencies in the bands I work with.

Regarding the *Golpe* insert, here is the story. The pressing plant told us the record would be ready in early March, so we started taking pre orders then. However, the plant didn't actually get us the records until sometime in May I think. People were getting frustrated that their pre orders had not shipped, so when the record was finally ready, I drove over four hours to the pressing plant to pick up the records myself. I knew that Tadzio was very attentive to the details in the packaging, so when I opened the shrink wrap on the first copy and saw the incorrect dust sleeve, I sent him a message on WhatsApp immediately. He wanted to give the records back to the pressing plant, have them remove the shrinkwrap, replace the insert, and re shrink the records, which would have caused a delay of a few more weeks. After some thought, I came up with the solution of including the correct sleeve along with the note. I think that, in the end, this was a good decision. People probably would not have even noticed the black dust sleeve otherwise, but with the note, we communicate to them how much details like that matter to us and how hard we work to make them happen. You might not have asked me this question if it weren't for the note!

Yeah probably, hey, I can only applaud Tadzio for knowing what he wants, and you guys for taking Tadzio's wish seriously and coming up with a solution! Something else, kudos for still printing promo material like posters and stickers. I remember in the nineties posters were a big part of the release itself. Gluing them to the walls late at night was maybe the biggest part of the promotion, gaining new souls outside of the scene. Nowadays I guess people see it as a useless investment? What made you decide to stick to your guns and keep printing promotional posters?

My walls were always covered with posters when I was a kid, and well into my twenties. Nowadays I try to display them more nicely, but I still love posters, stickers, and other ephemera. I love all of the extra artwork, and it can be a great way for an artist to set the tone for their music and encourage a more engaged and purposeful listening experience. I love to look over the inserts and packaging while I listen to the music, and when that is done really

well it can transport you to another world. When I have seen our posters hanging on someone's walls, I take that as the highest compliment a punk can give, haha!

I never really cared about whether something was a good investment, but I take what Sorry State does very seriously and if I put something into the world I want it to be something worthwhile. Toxic State Records is a big inspiration for me when it comes to this kind of thing. Their packaging design is always well thought out without seeming forced, everything looks super punk, and the effort and care they put into making their releases individually and by hand comes through in the finished product. I also think it's really cool and important to maintain lines of communication outside of technology and social media, and not to let these companies totally control who hears what we say. It feels like a much better investment to me to make a thousand cool looking posters and put them in orders for free than to spend the same amount of money on a social media ad campaign. It feels like a more meaningful interaction to me, but maybe it's just a nostalgia for an older iteration of capitalism. Or maybe I just like cool shit.

Well I see my sons delving into my sticker collection so it must be cool shit! Anyway, you got quite some releases up your sleeve already with SSR. Is there any release that stands out because of the people, because of the package, because of the message, because of whatever (i know, this sounds like deciding upon your favorite kid)? Let me go first, for me the 'Out Cold - Living Is Killing Me' feels like a special record. With Mark's passing and that record being 15 years in the making...

Yes, choosing a favorite release is a bit like choosing a favorite child. All of them are meaningful to me in different ways, and most of them have a lot of stories attached. Of course getting to work with some of my favorite bands has been wonderful, including Out Cold, Koro, and Direct Control. I am proud to be a small part of those bands' incredible stories. I also have a lot of love for the bands for whom we've put out multiple releases, such as Whatever Brains, Double Negative, Dark Ages, Libyans, and others. Most of my favorite bands have long careers, and I love seeing how artists evolve over time. I'm also fond of the releases where I made a lot of the packaging by hand, such as the Whatever Brains 2x12" where I screen printed all of the jackets or the many releases where I printed components like obi strips or helped design the parts of the packaging. Perhaps the most gratifying release I've done, though, is the American Idylls compilation LP. It was my dream to do a compilation record since the beginning of the label, and it took nearly two years of planning to make the album happen. The result is something of a monster, but it is incredible to have a snapshot of the North Carolina scene at that time, and it only

grows more precious to me as that time fades into the past.

I love it when a label goes the extra mile and assembles its own releases but that must be a very time consuming process. I'm thinking of those Youth Attack releases, you know. He handcuts all the sleeves, puts in weird stuff like that Arts 7" with micro speakers and if you fold it open a song from the 7" starts playing? Is that something you would consider doing as well?

For sure. I think what Youth Attack does is really cool, though I don't think I have the attention to detail or the artistic vision to make the kinds of things he does. I will say that when we design the packaging for a release we have to balance a lot of things. I cut my teeth in the 90s when having a 7" that cost more than \$3 warranted snide comments in fanzines, and I think I internalized this idea that everything associated with punk should be as cheap as possible. I'm always pointing out to bands that, yes, we can do this or that idea, but it means that your LP will cost \$18 rather than \$15, for instance. I also like for a release's packaging design to hang together as a complete idea, rather than just having needless bells and whistles to give a "premium" feel. There is a fine line between cool design and gimmicks. Like the first Whatever Brains album, for instance, has a gatefold sleeve and a printed booklet, but they're all designed by the same artist and they hang together as a complete package. The same goes for the Mutant Strain LP and many of the Double Negative records. If someone is going to invest their money and dedicate space in their home to a record, they should get an experience that is richer and more interesting than they would get from streaming the record online. Nowadays when I agree to do a release with a band I try to get them thinking about packaging design as early as possible so that we can create something that is unique and exciting.

Let's take a look at your active musical efforts. You're currently playing bass in Scarecrow, and like you mentioned earlier, you've been playing music for a long time. What's the biggest difference between releasing other bands and playing, recording and releasing your own band?



Picture of Scarecrow by unknown
(screenshot from a live clip on YouTube)

Honestly, the process of releasing my own bands isn't too different from releasing projects by other bands. In both situations you have to coordinate a lot of different things like recording, artwork and packaging design, promotion, etc. and make sure everyone who is involved with the project is happy with the results. Perhaps it is a little more difficult to put out my own bands because it's hard to have confidence in it. Sometimes I find it difficult to promote my own projects without feeling conceited or something. I care about everything I release, though, and many of the records I've released by other artists are just as important to me as the ones I've played on. At the end of the day, every project is different and they all have their own stories and different aspects that turned out really well or drove me crazy at certain points.

Hmm, I guess there's nothing to feel conceited about? As a label boss you're in charge of what bands you will or will not release. And releasing your own band(s) is definitely cool to do. As for Scarecrow, I fucking love Scarecrow! Hope to hear more from that soon! Dare I say Scarecrow takes it to another level for you in that way that Usman plays drums and is your employee at the recordstore and label? And if I'm not mistaken Usman released Scarecrow on his own label BunkerPunks, right?

I'm glad to hear you like Scarecrow! We just got test pressings for our new EP a few days ago and I'm really excited about how it sounds! Bunker Punks is actually owned by Usman and Jeff, both of whom work at Sorry State. Jeff is the longest serving Sorry State employee, having started when our store opened in 2013. Jeff and Usman are releasing the Scarecrow EP on Bunker Punks again, alongside the record by Fatal, their project with Kevin from Out Cold. I like all the bands I've been in, but Scarecrow is definitely special. I've played with lots of talented people, but never with a group of people who are so focused and dedicated. I'm more or less in the driver's seat when it comes to Sorry State, but Scarecrow is really Jeff and Usman's vision with me doing my best to play a supporting role.

Never underestimate the bass player! Hahaha. So can we expect a Scarecrow LP soon? Some more touring, European soil as well maybe?

Next Scarecrow will release our second EP, and after that a 4-way split LP with us, Destruct, Dis-sekerad, and Rat Cage. I think this will be something like Thrash Til Death with each band having an EPs worth of tracks (Scarecrow is contributing four new songs). Hopefully the next step is an LP. We have five songs written for that so far, but I think we want to do more than just 8 or 10 songs on a short 12" EP, so we will need to spend a lot more time writing before we are ready to record that. We are doing a short tour with Scalpel in December 2021, and it looks like Scarecrow will go to Europe in July of 2022. We are very excited!

So am I, really looking forward to summer! Now, last but not least, the record store (both physically and digitally). You've become THE household name when it comes to titles available. What made (according to you) the

difference between Sorry State records and other (online) shops. I mean, you're able to sell quite some copies from one release at times? I read, I think it was the Illiterates LP, you initially wanted to order 100 copies for the shop? That's a lot for a distributed title of an 'unknown' band, right?

That is very nice of you to say! We have worked hard to get the store and distro to a place where we can carry as much great punk rock as we can. It has taken a long time to get to this place, though... The distro and label started about 16 years ago! Speaking of which, I think one difference between Sorry State and some other distros is that we have simply been around for a long time and we've never stopped or even taken a break. Just being around, you develop relationships with labels, bands, distributors, and customers, and having all of these relationships makes things easier, especially when our relationships have been good in the past and we have developed some trust. We always try to learn from our mistakes and make things better every day, and I think that has gained us some respect and given us some allowance if we mess up every once in a while. Another way Sorry State differs from other punk distros is that we put a lot of effort into, for lack of a better term, marketing the music we carry. It's easy to buy some cool records at a wholesale price and list them on a bigcartel site. However, only the most popular items will sell this way. We try to help people learn about the smaller bands, labels, zines, etc., that they might not know about otherwise, and to understand why they are important and why we stock them. We don't just want people to buy the music we carry; we want them to love it and to think it's as important as we do.

But yes, we can sell many copies of some releases! It's not uncommon these days for us to sell 100+ copies of a really good record. I like to think we can help turn some people on to a great band like Illiterates who might not have heard them otherwise, but ultimately it's the quality of the music (along with the record's design and packaging) that helps it to sell a lot of copies.



Like I said earlier, I love it when people go the extra mile for their business. In the case of Sorry State, the newsletter definitely fits under the extra mile category. I love it when fridays come (it's friday over here when I open my mailbox) and I can go look for the newsletter! You put a lot of time in that one, right? To me it's like the source for the best, in depth reviews of new and old records!

Does that newsletter give a great return on investment? It seems so much work?

I'm so glad you enjoy the newsletter. It makes me happy when people say that because I spend a ton of time on it. We definitely get a big spike of orders each week when we send out the email, but it's something I would be doing anyway. I've been writing record reviews since I was a teenager, posting them on various embarrassing websites over the years. It's almost like a compulsion at this point, and if I put too much pressure on myself or forget to enjoy writing, it can take the fun out of listening to music. But it gives me an excuse to listen to music all the time, which is all I really want to be doing. If I am sitting at home at 2pm on a Wednesday afternoon blasting the Quarantine LP, I can convince myself that I'm being productive. In a lot of ways, it's less like the newsletter supports Sorry State than all of Sorry State is an excuse for me to do the newsletter. It probably would have been much easier to do a zine instead!

I would definitely buy that zine! I love how the lot of you write about your record pick of the week! probably the only reviews i read anywhere... You were mentioning the 'used record bin' earlier. So I always wonder if you print classifieds like 'I'll buy your records' or anything? How do you come across those things. And one of those collections was a special one apparently, the collection of miss Veola McLean. To the ones not familiar, can you tell us about that collection? Who was Veola and what makes her collection so special?

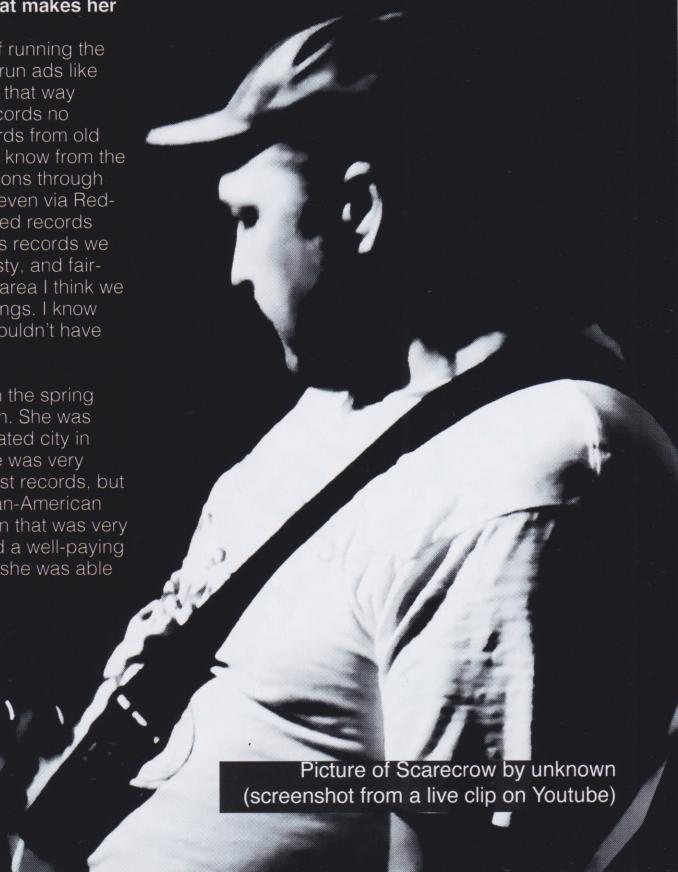
Yes, acquiring used records is that part of running the store that I put the most work into. We do run ads like that, and we have gotten some good stuff that way but also wasted a lot of time looking at records no one wants. We also get a lot of used records from old friends, longtime customers, and people I know from the scene. Every once in a while I find collections through Facebook Marketplace or Craigslist, and even via Reddit a few times. I am always looking for used records for the store. Whenever we buy someone's records we always deal with them with respect, honesty, and fairness, and particularly here in the Raleigh area I think we have built a strong reputation for those things. I know many people have sold us records that wouldn't have considered selling them to anyone else.

We acquired Veola McLean's collection in the spring of 2021. She was a very interesting person. She was a black woman from a small, very segregated city in North Carolina called Southern Pines. She was very proud of her heritage and collected not just records, but a wide variety of artifacts relating to African-American history. She went to college at a time when that was very uncommon for black women, and she had a well-paying job but never married or had children, so she was able

to indulge her passion for these artifacts. When she passed away from COVID-19 early in 2021, the executor of her estate decided we were the best people to help sell her records. Since Miss Veola didn't have heirs, we are donating what we would typically pay the owner to a scholarship fund in her name. We also had the idea to place an insert inside every record that briefly tells Miss Veola's story. While I'm sad I never got to meet Miss Veola, managing the sale of her collection has been such a joy. Not only are there a lot of amazing and very rare records, but helping get money to her scholarship fund and sharing her story and legacy with other people has been an amazing experience.

Damn, I thought that would be a nice story to round up our chat. What you're doing is incredible! Thank you Daniel for sharing this insight on Sorry State records, big love to all of you. And thank you for your big support towards the zine, the floor is yours, take it!

Thank you Kristof! I am so honored to be a part of *_My War_*. I love the zine and value the work you do for the punk scene so much. To everyone else reading, treat your fellow humans and animals with love, compassion, respect, and kindness, and stay punk!



Picture of Scarecrow by unknown
(screenshot from a live clip on Youtube)



I Don't know on who's instagram I saw the bandcamp link passing by, but I remember checking it instantly cause of the people involved. And man, what a slap in the face! Anyway think hardcore punk in capitals! Check them out if you haven't already.

Indre Krig is a rather young band, formed during dark times. How did you get together? Who had the big idea to form IK? And how did you (the one with the idea) start hustling for members? Your bandcamp speaks of the Boston/Oslo/Copenhagen conglomerate? Enlighten us!

JJ: I heard about the band from C who convinced me to be in the band. Erling and I play together in Cesspool but have jammed the riff to SMD ever since he moved Down from Oslo.

About the conglomerate, I honestly couldn't tell you, since I have no clue what a conglomerate is, though I believe, and correct me if i'm wrong, that Conglomerate was an old norse wooden ship that was used during the civil war.

CS: I got lucky - I just happened to move in with some people I met on the internet, who are in the Copenhagen scene (one plays in Cesspool and Planet Y). I met all three of my bandmates through them, but it was after I saw my first live show (Cesspool) that I drunkenly persuaded both JJ and E to put me in a band. I never thought they actually would but here we are! In terms of the Boston/Oslo/Copenhagen conglomerate - that's each of the cities we grew up in, but we're all based in Copenhagen.

E: It started out with me going nuts about having nothing to do during lockdown, so i made a bunch of songs and was planning to make a solo project for it, but one day on a binge i showed it to Salomon (night fever etc) and he said he wanted to play bass, so i hit up jonathan to do the drums. Salomon didn't really have time to play, so we tried out a few other people before Christina came along, and Chloë was recruited somewhere along the way as well.

C: Yeah, I joined as the last member. I guess they were running out of people to ask to fill the spot as bass player, cause I never played bass before they asked me to, haha! I was stoked to be asked, cause at that time I already heard the recording and thought it was ace. Lucky for me, they have been very patient with me, while I goof around with my new instrument :)

Haha, I wasn't so much looking for the meaning of the conglomerate thing, but more the backgrounds and upbringings. So who's from Boston? And did the rich Boston HC Punk history reflect in your upbringing? To the ones hailing from Copenhagen and Oslo, I love those cities as well, they just didn't have SSD nor Jerry's Kids...

E: Well I mean, they did have SDH, Svart Framtid, APA, Betong Hysteria, SMH and Kafka Prosess. I don't know if that counts for more or less?

C: You dissin' K-Town?? This interview is over! Haha! Yeah well, Copenhagen didn't have those, but we had Kalashnikov, Enola Gay, Electric Deads, SODS, ADS

INDRE KRIG

etc. back in the day (when I was still wearing a diaper) ... need me to continue? Denmark might be a small country and Copenhagen an even smaller city, but you can't say there wasn't a kickass scene here - many times over the years. I was fortunate enough to be here, as bands like Amdi Petersens Armé, Snipers, Gorilla Angreb and Young Wasteners were just getting started. We tend to glorify the past, cause really the scene was not all it is amped up to be in retrospect - but the music was killer and those years still mean everything to me.

CS: Call it a real-life version of The Alchemist, but I had to move halfway across the world to realise the treasure (Boston HC) was where I started all along. I'm the one from Boston and I didn't get into hardcore until I moved.

I would never dis K-Town. I guess I was hoping to ask some crucial nature nurture questions with answers containing the words Boston, DYS, Al Barile etc... haha.

Well let's get into this then, Chloé, you getting in touch with HC Punk was just a matter of the right place at the right time? What were you listening to back in Boston and what exactly attracts you to HC Punk? And what does Punk mean to you (that's a question to everyone)?

JJ: Friendship. Starting to play instruments with your best friends. Going skating and drinking with the punk family from Helsingborg, playing SKATE before, after and during shows with touring bands. Listening to The Spits. All the good shit.

CC: That's a big question right there. To me, punk is borderless friendships, it's community and solidarity, it's creating a bubble of our own in this hellhole called society. When I first started getting involved in the scene, I was attracted to both the political and the musical aspects of it, and I placed myself somewhere that makes it possible to try to live out the ideals I seek politically, in a music oriented community. The counter cultural music scene belonging on the far left on the political spectrum, is what I call home. But that doesn't always mean that the music itself has to be political in it's lyrical content. I love to be challenged about the things I believe, and I have found it incredibly empowering to be in a band with Chloé who comes from a different background than us, musically - but shares so much on the political side of things with us. It's great to be able to share music and politics and getting excited about shit with people you care about. That's punk!

CS: It was definitely a right-place, right-time situation! Back in Boston I listened to a lot of hip-hop (I wrote my dissertation in university on political hip-hop and social movements), as well as pop and indie rock - not a lot of punk though. I played classical piano for 10 years and I was actually in an acapella group, so this is quite a deviation for me. As for what attracted me to punk, it's a lot of things. Punk has brought together lots of different aspects of my life that I was looking to locate, if that makes sense - I've always loved music and

wanted to make music, and especially write lyrics. But I've also been looking for a community, and for a place to discuss politics and social dynamics and ideas that aren't necessarily part of mainstream discussions. Being part of the scene has encouraged me to get involved in local activism as well. So basically, it brings together music, politics and people with a purpose and energy level that I haven't found in any other sectors of my life, and I have felt so embraced and encouraged by my people in the scene - especially my three bandmates. Being a singer has given me confidence and drive, and the opportunity to express myself in a whole other way. It's given me a place to experience the emotion of anger and feel empowered by its energy in a way that feels productive and not destructive. My first day in the band, Erling said to me that we do this for fun - it's not about making money, or even about making anything new, we do it for ourselves and for the people that want to hear it, and that's it. The concept of creating something just because you want to, without needing to profit off it or be the best at it to make it worth it, without measuring it against those metrics of success that have been so ingrained in my upbringing as an American, has felt revolutionary in and of itself, like an antidote to those pressures and a way to unlearn them. So punk means a lot of things to me - and I'm just getting started.

E: I plopped into Blitz, Ungdomshuset's sister house in Oslo, one day when I was 13, and there wasn't really a choice for me anymore after that. It was where I was meant to be. Punk is community, compassion, activism, an attitude and the struggle to to survive causing the least possible harm

Indre Krig is Dansk for 'civilian war'. Seems fitting in these dark ages filled with protest and counter-demonstrations... What was your reason to stick with this?

JJ: Indre Krig means inner war or a war within, which is a part of a sentence some norwegian said once, I believe. Also there's been a lot of hardship within people that we know during the pandemic like: anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts etc. So I think that it is more in that vibe, for me at least.

CS: For me, the inner conflict has two main meanings. The first is about trying not to be a hypocrite, and conducting myself in line with the values that I have rather than deferring to convenience or greed. I like our band name because it reminds me to try to live up to those values instead of being a hypocrite - especially since all three of our demo songs are, on some level, about powerful hypocrites. The other meaning for me is like JJ said, about mental health - both my own and those around me. As the conversations around mental health have opened up and become normalised, I've come to realise how many people are struggling with various inner wars being waged in silence all around, and I like that our band name speaks to that.

E: Yeah I wanted a name that would work in both Norwegian and Danish and Indre Krig (inner war, as opposed to inner peace), both sound killer and reflect the music well, so it was a no brainer once we got up with it.

Google translate failed me again, fuck that. Oh well, Inner War. The mental health issue definitely arrived very close to home during the periods of lockdown, like JJ said. I'm glad the conversation has opened up AND we've overcome the strict lockdown's. I wanna go back to August 20th and 21st. What a relief that weekend was? How did Indre Krig live towards this? And Erlend and Christina, maybe a little more intense since you're on the organising team?

E: For me it was just business as usual. I've been booking gigs for 15 years, and K-Town was pretty much run of the mill. Peo-

ple are super easy to deal with and I also enjoy organizing so playing the gig was just a break. C. 2020/21 was a tough time for everyone. And yeah, I think we all dealt with mental health issues along the way. I am usually a very busy person. I work a full time job, organize concerts and volunteer at Ungdomshuset, do bands, artwork and a million fuckin' things, always. I'm like a 110% kinda person, ... and then lockdown happened. And we're at 10% from one day to the next. That was rough. But in some way, maybe also healthy - to slow the fuck down for once. Me and my partner did an enormous amount of puzzles and revisited records that had been collecting dust in the farthest corner of the collection. Good things can come off shitty situations as well. But I am saying this, painfully aware of the privileged place we are at here. We really cannot compare the Covid-situation in Denmark, to many other places in the world.

When we did K-Town this year, it marked the beginning of "normalcy" (whatever the fuck that means) here and in that sense it was a great relief. But it was also just "business as usual". The fest is usually a 1300 people event and this year we had 500, so you can say it was an easy start. It was my 20th year of organizing the fest and so it comes as no surprise that the fest is very dear to me. Still, every year I remind myself of how big of a difference it makes to the people coming here. It makes it all worthwhile when you can share stories with people coming a long way to participate and they emphasize the importance and how much they have missed this, and us. Real tears were shed that weekend. Punk is love.

Damn man, Punk definitely is love. Anyway, Chloë you were saying earlier you begged (:-) to be included in the line-up. Did you have band experience before Indre Krig? And You were mentioning the lyrics being about powerful Hypocrites. Can you get a little deeper into this? One song is called Hypocrite, I read politics... Then there's SMD, seems people can suck your dick?

C: Read your response to Chloës answer and you have it right there.:-)

CS: No band experience but I always wanted to make music, so I jumped at the chance. I'm American and I wrote hypocrite specifically about what happened when Ruth Bader Ginsberg died. The way Republicans pushed through Amy Coney-Barret, it's just... shameless. Especially Senator Lindsey Graham, it's textbook hypocrisy, he didn't even try to hide it. And the way Democrats were surprised is shameful. They are no match for Republicans, they keep being blindsided by their hypocrisy - their stupidity is shocking. But the song was mostly aimed at Republicans, it feels good to tell them to eat my shit. As for SMD, what Christina said - that's the response I wish I could give to men who ask impertinent questions :-)

Haha, damn, you got me there. Went straight for it like a dog for a cookie. I wanna get into the first part of your answer. The lyrics to 'Hypocrite' are on one of the most political levels there is, Republicans vs Democrats in the US. More specifically on the blatant hypocrisy displayed by Republicans. Do you feel it's important as an American in a Euro band to write about the American political landscape? What is it that pushes so many people towards

the fakes that are the Republicans?

C: There's a lot I could get into here but at the end of the day I'm just writing about what I know and about what's pissing me off at the moment. I think the thing that was so specifically disheartening about this instance is that they didn't even try to hide the hypocrisy, and the fact that they no longer feel any need to code it is pretty terrifying. They know that their people will like them even more when they flagrantly defy norms and act authoritarian. Sure, it's always been the same results, but the process is increasingly terrifying, you get me? This is different than before because Republicans are actively working to dismantle the democratic institutions we have in place to defend against authoritarian rule. Demographically speaking, Republicans will be obsolete in a few election cycles. They can't win fairly anymore. I don't think I'm equipped to personally answer the question of why people vote republican but I'd say people are suffering a lot, are exposed to massive amounts of misinformation, and also democrats are mostly idiots that don't know how to communicate or agree or accomplish anything important.

The impertinent! SMD. Well I might as well turn this into something else, sexism. As strong active females, do you feel you are being treated equally in the HC Punk scene? Some time ago I had a chat with the guys in Zodd (Singapore) and then later again with Dan who's also in Doldrey and he was saying the scene over there isn't that female friendly. The band Fuse got a lot of shit for being an all women band. Christina, you also played SEA with NONPLUS, were you offended at some point?

CC: When I was younger and started to get involved in the late 90's, it was definitely harder to be a woman in the scene. It was much harder to get accepted and the little things that guys take for granted, like being invited to play in a band, go to shows and hang out, are much more difficult for women. Women are much more dependent on each other in order to get proper footing in the scene. I wanna say that it is easier now, but I also know that I am now in a more privileged position, due to the many years of involvement in the DIY punk scene, and I am no longer so often met with those same obstacles. A friend of mine was once, in a plenum, met with the phrase "when you speak, you are speaking as a white cis gendered male". It really pissed her (and me) off at the time, but I have found it to be more true than I want to admit. When you're supported by a bunch of white dudes, and they have your back, that saves you from a lot of hassle you would have otherwise have gotten. It has taught me to try to do my best in empowering the women I see around me, to make sure women still have a strong foothold in the scene, and that our community stays strong and diverse (which of course does not exclusively consist of men and women - but that's a whole other chapter of people having a fucking hard time getting proper foothold in a scene that by default is meant to include everyone that wants to be part ...). I have always hated that period where the men really tried to act "inclusive" but ended up exoticifying women on stage instead of supporting them as equals. Always loathed being on a poster with a "straight up hardcore from the streets" and a "downtuned melodic neo crust" band when my band was described as "female fronted punk". Like that's a fuckin' genre! I am aware of the problems women have in the SE/Asian scene, but I don't feel equipped to talk in detail about them too much. So much pressure from especially religion and family, make it very hard for women to be an equal part of the scene. I did however, meet a bunch of really admirable and kickass women along the way. And considering the hardships they have to endure to do what they love, makes me humble as fuck. I didn't have any personal bad experiences, but I am certain it would have been different, had I not travelled in a bus with 8 dudes :). C: I honestly can't say I have had any negative experiences - but you have to remember that I've only been in the scene during covid and we've barely gotten to play. It's also important to note that I've got some really well-respected and engaged members of the scene behind me every time I get on stage,

so no one has given me any shit as a newbie or as a woman. So maybe ask me this question after our first tour, I've been warned that I may have some other experiences.

What about musical influences? Most of you played in bands before, were there some musical references you wanted to avoid?

E: anything fast and hard really. Early Poison Idea, BGK, Siste Dagers Helvete, Koro, Necros etc, but we're very lucky to be part of the best era of punk since the mid 80's and there's so many good bands around these days it's ridiculous, so stuff like Krigshoder, Rashomon, Exil, Taqbir etc makes me want to play as good as physically possible, but i draw most of the riff inspiration from the classics

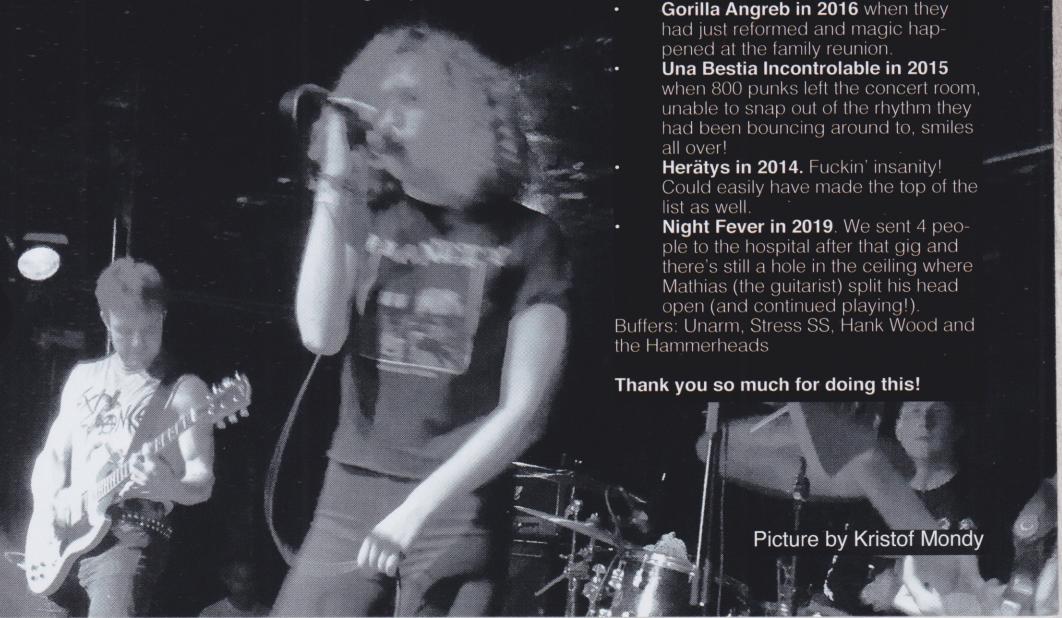
I don't really know about actively avoiding stuff really? I try to avoid using riffs that are too similar to what other current bands are doing, so sometimes when i make a new song i have to listen through a few records to see if i didn't just subliminal steal it from them hehe, and we actively avoid the primitive tappa tappa smash beat. It sounds really good and I'm all for tribal war dance beats, but I think it's just been used up for years to come by now, so it's not for us.

JJ: Drumwise a lot of my influence comes from people i've been in bands with or drummers of bands i've listened to a ton. Most notably Ugur (Taphos/Bliss/Septage) and Jesper (Night Fever/Hjertestop) along with Punch and Rival Mob and Jerry's Kids. Drummers who have those fills where your brain just melts and stops working entirely.

C: That's a difficult question to answer. In my book, there's only two kinds of music: good and bad. And you can find either in all genres and corners of the scene ... I love the way Erlend writes some pretty quirky and twisted riffs sometimes and Jonathan pairs it up with heavy and more simple moshable shit.

Thank you Erlend for including that list with contemporary acts! Why is it we always tend to drop names from the classics (I'm guilty as well)? Anyway, I must say, I absolutely love the demo! Tight drumming, great riffs (both on guitar and bass) and some awesome vocals! And then there's the Nicky Rat artwork and a US version on the awesome NY based Roachleg records. Wow, shit is pulling together! How did all this come about? Why Nicky and Roachleg?

E: Thanks a lot! I first met Nicky back in Brüssel in 2014 and we've just sort of stayed in touch since, and I'm really into his artwork and person and I like collaborating with friends, so it made sense to do it with him. We also talked a bit about doing a tape release for the



demo since we originally just plopped it on bandcamp with no further plans, and his PMT label collaborates with Roachleg, and one day Joe from Roachleg wrote to me and we just went for it.

I Think PMT and Roachleg are two of the coolest labels around these days and they consistently put out insane bangers like the Killing Frost tape and Yuppie Gore Filth (i had no idea Electro Hippies worship was something i needed, but it is) so i was beyond stoked that they were into us.

Always trust the process! Alright, I guess this is it. 2 more things before we leave?

Can we expect more/new Indre Krig material in the near future? And LP perhaps? Or is the focus on playing live? Touring plans soon?

Christina, you were saying you have been actively (co)organising the K-Town fest for 20 years. What are your absolute highs? Top 5 (live performances, happenings, bike war oddities...).

JJ: As soon as my knee is healed we're gonna get on with it. Lots of new stuff, nothing set in stone. We'll go touring as soon as the plague is less shit.

CS: Yeah we want it all - new songs, an LP, lots more shows - as soon as we can tour, we'll be ready to go

CC: Second that!!! Can't wait to get started! We have several recording plans and try not to upset ourselves too much with all the tours that aren't possible to do right now. But as soon as they are, we'll hit the road for sure!

As for the K-Town question, Yeah, since 2001. Ouf, it's hard to only name 5, cause there are so many! But let's try (in no particular order):

- **Skitkids.** In my opinion, they killed it every year they played and are considered royalty in my book!
- **Gorilla Angreb in 2016** when they had just reformed and magic happened at the family reunion.
- **Una Bestia Incontrolable in 2015** when 800 punks left the concert room, unable to snap out of the rhythm they had been bouncing around to, smiles all over!
- **Herätys in 2014.** Fuckin' insanity! Could easily have made the top of the list as well.
- **Night Fever in 2019.** We sent 4 people to the hospital after that gig and there's still a hole in the ceiling where Mathias (the guitarist) split his head open (and continued playing!).

Buffers: Unarm, Stress SS, Hank Wood and the Hammerheads

Thank you so much for doing this!

Picture by Kristof Mondy

Rollins Band - Low Self Opinion 12"

In some way it feels like I'm cheating here, since I already wrote about Henry in the Black Flag - Damaged record review. But hey, what can I say, I like Henry's endeavors. And I keep telling myself that this was something else. Now I know a lot of people have an opinion on everything he did after Black Flag, and those opinions range from sceptical to downright negative as fuck. Well I liked Rollins band. I also liked Henry's books, saw 2 of his roadshows live, some others on VHS (yes VHS, it goes way back), and I hated him as a nazi in Sons Of Anarchy (which actually means I think he put up a great performance there)... et voila.

Now I must be honest, I won't go filling a full page based on the analysis of these two songs counting 12", or a total of 12:36 minutes worth of music; right? Right! So I wanted to start with a small anecdote to explain why Rollins means so much to me, or why I look up to him. So whilst this Low Self Opinion 12" saw the light of day in 1992 I want to take you to 1994 to understand this admiration for the bloke. An admiration created during his performance at the Dour music festival. A little timeframe situation might be handy here. We're early July, I'm 17, and I'm attending the big Dour festival for the first time. Dour music festival is a very eclectic one. I know most of the summer festivals have a diverse line up now but we're talking 27 years ago. So next to Rollins Band there was Cypress Hill, Babes In Toyland, The Posies, Blur and Tool. 1994 was also in some way the breakthrough year for Rollins Band with the release of 'Weight' containing the hit single 'Liar'. Whilst for example Tool had released *Undertow* the year prior. And yes, *Undertow* is that album with the song 'Bottom' on which Henry has some extensive spoken word part. There you go, all set to dive into this little anecdote!

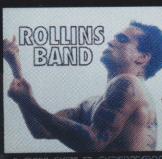
So 17 year old me is in the front row to catch Tool. After Tool it's up to Rollins Band to hit the stage. So I'm watching Tool, and they set up an amazing performance. Maynard moves like how burning plastic curls, Adam is looking all angry and stuff, his amps have horns on top. Paul is like slapping the bass like a smooth criminal and Danny is about to break his drums, or so it seems. And I'm bedazzled! But somehow my eyes catch some movement in the back of the stage, behind some curtain. And my brain needed some time to translate what it saw into facts. I saw Henry. Lifting weights. I guess he was warming up, stoic look, keeps on lifting during several Tool songs (and they have some long songs you know). And of course he jumps on stage during 'Bottom' and does his spoken word thing. All awesome! Very enjoyable. So Tool finishes it's awesome (and at the same time awkward) set and we stay put to be in the front row for Rollins Band.

And then it happened. Rollins came on like a wildman! While Tool was kind of imploding with it's (great) performance, Rollins was obviously exploding. Muscles all tensed from the weight lifting during Tool. Playing in a black shirt, black shorts and barefoot. So he had builded his setlist towards *Liar* (that was a really big hit by then), and people just knew Other songs from *Weight*, so a lot of singalongs and pogoing is going on. By the third song in the set he had torn his shirt off his chest, so bare chested muscles are rolling around like it's happy hour in the pinball machine. And then they start *Liar*. And he starts so furious, seems legit angry. Phil Collins couldn't have said it better, something was in the air that night! So Henry legit angry until he takes a jump Ray of Today would've been proud of! Like a vertical split, his knees are like as high as his face, incredible. So he jumps, and turns around, back to the audience. And he stays like that for 30 seconds or so. Was it timed, I don't know but I went together with a small part from the song that's building up tension. And the moment the song is exploding, musically, again he turns around and his face is covered in blood! So what happened, his knee weren't just as high as his face, his knees met his face, he actually knee'd himself on the nose. Blood poured out his nose, off course Henry is using that and blows, like he's spitting blood all over. That was crazy! Never since that moment, have I ever experienced such raw, primitive and neanderthal energy from a frontman. That always stucked with me and made me follow Rollins up close.

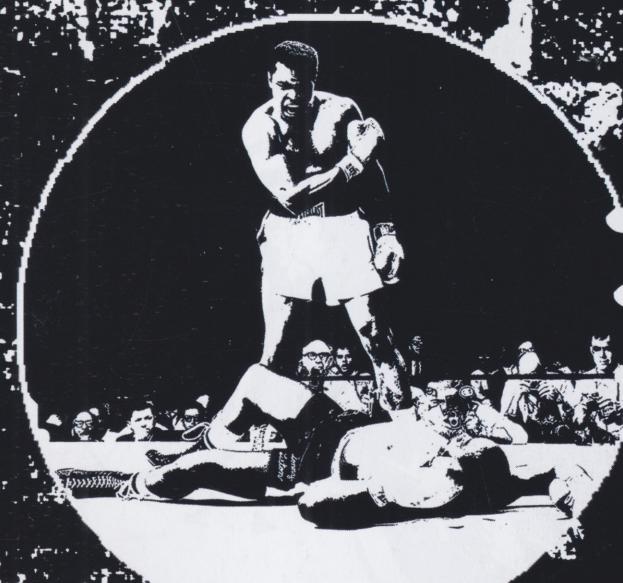
So there you go. Now the songs. Side A has 'Low Self Opinion' (this was the single ahead of the 'End Of Silence' album, which is the best Rollins Band output together with 'Life Time' in my opinion). A great song, better than 'Liar' if you ask me. Rollins writes his lyrics like upright poems confronting people around him with his or her shortcomings. Very confrontational, and sung like it's all slogans from a march, while the chorus is more emotional and pittyfull. The way he rhymes and puts himself in a comfortable position is admirable. Musically Rollins Band has always been heavy and groovy at the same time. Drummer is top! Biggest achievement from the music is how it leaves room for the vocals and thus creates tension between the band and the listener. I always loved how the song ends with Henry claiming there is hope and a possibility to change as a person. 5minutes and 18 seconds, time to flip to side B.

Side B has 'Lie, Lie, Lie' is a real 'B side', it didn't appear on any album. And lyrically I totally follow that. I guess Rollins says, screams, shouts 'Lie. You lie'. Something like that. Musically it's a song that builds up and breaks down again, with nods to maybe even Tool (how they go from near silence to deafening outbursts), I guess Henry just didn't feel it?

There you go. This 12" analysis was more a look into 'why there's Rollins appreciation from my side'. Next time I promise an analysis of a real banger. Or maybe not... Till next time!





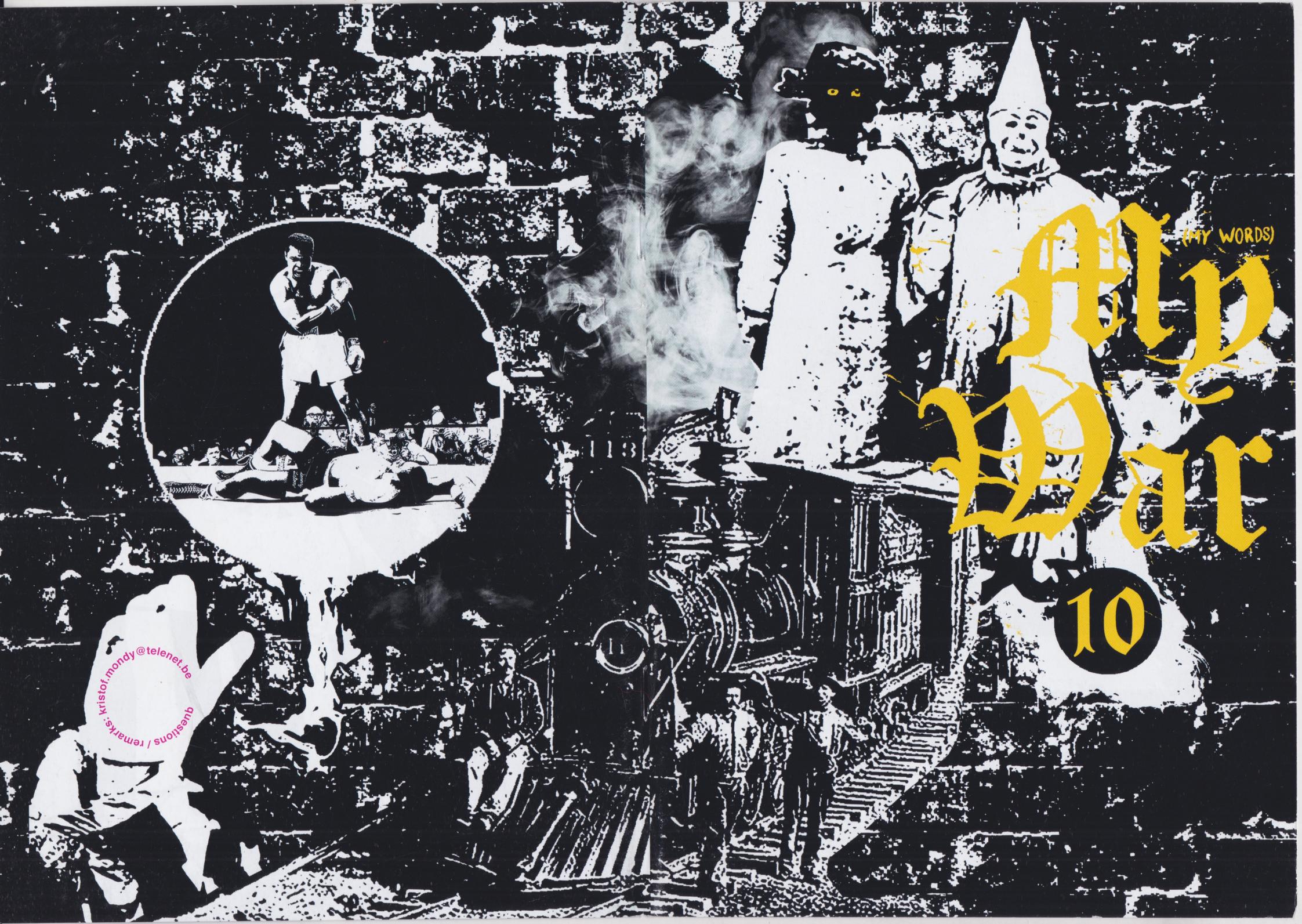


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questions / remarks:

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(MY WORDS)

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questions / remarks: